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APRIL 2004

# neatoday

The Magazine of the National Education Association

# THE FIX

## REPAIR MANUAL FOR A LAW THAT'S FALLEN FLAT

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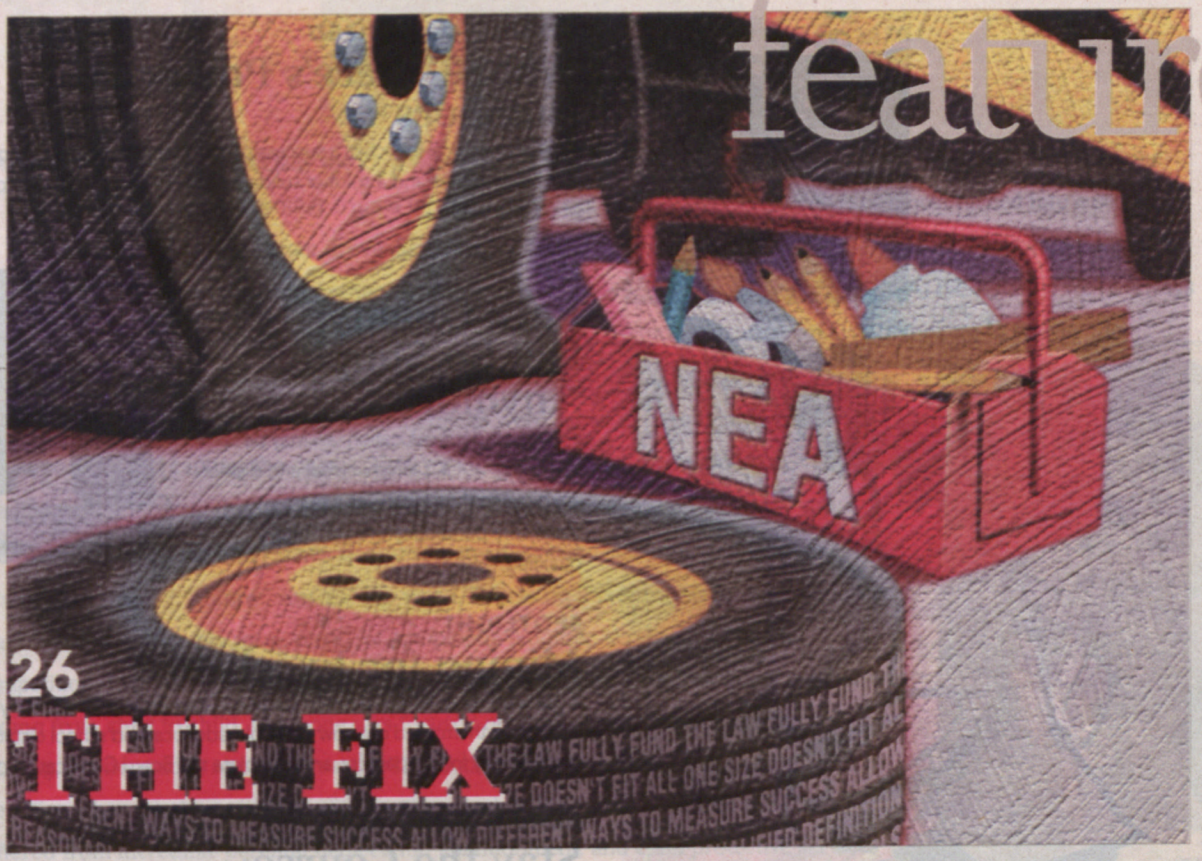
# features

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## THE FIX

The hue and cry over the so-called No Child Left Behind law has only become more fervent in the two years since its passage. Can it ever live up to the spirit of its name? Yes, but ensuring the necessary repairs will require focus and mobilization. Here's a guide for making it happen.

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### When Words Burn 10

The Bush Administration has never embraced NEA's ideas about how to improve the controversial federal education law, but when Education Secretary Rod Paige called the Association a "terrorist organization" because of its criticism, NEA members talked back—and got busy.

A CLASS THAT STAYS TOGETHER

### We're Baaack! 40

What results when a teacher follows her students up the elementary school ladder from first to fifth grade? A classroom that functions as a family—minus the sibling rivalries. Meet Melissa Fleischer and her fifth-grade class and learn about their experiment in looping.

ILLUSTRATION: JOHN SCHREINER; SMALL PHOTOS LEFT TO RIGHT: CARLSON/UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE; SCOTT SUCHMAN

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GETTING ORGANIZED

## Where There's Power in Numbers 20

An Alabama local launches a successful membership drive and proves that big numbers and a spirit of solidarity can make a school district sit up and listen.

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If you want more National Board Certified Teachers in your district, you've got to support them. Find out how one Colorado local and school district helps teachers pay for, prepare for, and complete the Board Certification process.

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LAST BELL

## Moving Mountains 64

One teacher brings a bagful of books to a place without hope.

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SMALL PHOTOS THIS PAGE FROM TOP: CARMEN SISSON, BOB RIHA JR., CHRIS HASTON/NBC, BOB RIHA JR; ILLUSTRATION: SUSAN LEVAN

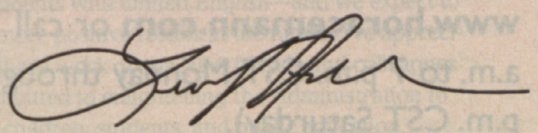


® 1

# A Thousand Words

I love cupcakes, especially the kind with swirled frosting and sprinkles. Once, when I was a kid, I brought one home for my little brother from a birthday party, but that magnanimous gesture almost turned into a second helping (luckily, my mom drove fast). So on a recent visit to Northern California schools, I was blown away by the willpower of second graders who posed with an awesome tray of cupcakes. ¶ At *NEA Today*, we're always looking for better ways to tell your story, both in words and in pictures, and we're looking to convey the complexity of teaching in America. Anyway, that's how we ended up in this classroom. ¶

The two birthday kids and a couple of their friends were asked to pose really close to the treats, so we could capture the details. They moaned a bit about how gooood the cupcakes smelled, but otherwise, they were happy to mug for the camera and returned the tray to the shelf for later. (I, on the other hand, had to sate my desires by shelling out a quarter at the school bake sale.) ¶ "Happy" was the key word. Recess on this sunny, crisp day reinforced that impression. Nice blacktop, plenty of equipment, laughter, screeches of playful competition. Everything looked good. ¶ In the next classroom, a cool, eloquent teacher was gliding from child to child. Everyone was focused on work. Then, one boy started crying, sobbing, for no readily apparent reason. The teacher comforted him as she walked him to the office. Then, as she consulted with another teacher, it became clear that this child suffered from incredible parental neglect and abandonment, and child protective services would have to be called. ¶ The willpower that the cupcake kids showed was impressive. The willpower the neglected boy showed—by merely trying in school—was heartbreaking. Each child harbors a story, and if they're lucky, most of the time it'll be a happy one ("my mom brought cupcakes this morning!"). But educators know that life's complexities come through their doors every day, borne on the shoulders of some very young people. ¶ In a future issue, you'll probably see the cupcake kids, but not the neglected child. There are issues of respecting privacy, and also, in cases like that, the picture wouldn't tell a thousand words. Only the story can do that. Read Chris Bowen's essay, "Moving Mountains" (page 64). You'll see his students clearly. And if you have a picture to paint for us in words, sad or sweet, drop us a line.



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***NEA Today*** (ISSN 0734-7219) is published eight times a year, monthly, in September, October, November, January, February, March, April, and May by the National Education Association, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036-3290.

Periodicals postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices.

**Postmaster**: Send address changes to *NEA Today*, Attn: NEA Business & Finance Address Change, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036. Telephone: 202-822-7065.

**Members**: To change address, see information below.

***NEA Today*** is mailed to all NEA members as a benefit of membership. Nonmember subscription prices: $55 for institution subscriptions; $90 for individual domestic and foreign subscriptions. For members, subscriptions represent $4.50 of annual dues.

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# NEA: Democracy in Action

You are the NEA! For 147 years, through boom and bust, war and peace, and one education craze after another, the National Education Association has supported the teachers and education support professionals who are in America's classrooms and workplaces, so that you can focus on democracy's greatest promise—providing a free, quality, public education to all children. We have served as your national voice for public schools.

Our headquarters are in Washington, D.C., but we derive all of our power and influence from our members.

—REG WEAVER

How have we managed through all these years to not only survive, but thrive?

I believe that democracy has been the key.

Our headquarters are in Washington, D.C., but we derive all of our power and influence from our members—2.7 million teachers, education support professionals, college faculty, and student and retired educators located in every state of the union. It is our members and our democratic process that keep us strong and relevant.

NEA's budget, dues structure, and strategic plan are all a part of our democratic process. Policy positions and legislative programs are voted on by democratically elected representatives of our 2.7 million members during our annual meeting—the NEA Representative Assembly. Candidate recommendations for the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate are approved by NEA's PAC Council, which comprises democratically elected presidents of our state Associations. An NEA recommendation for a United States presidential candidate is approved by both the NEA PAC Council and the Representative Assembly. And, among NEA's strongest testaments to its democratic process, is the secret ballot vote for NEA officers.

I remind you of our processes because I believe that you must be prepared when NEA detractors try to separate you from your Association. NEA's commitment to democracy enables every NEA member to say—"I am the NEA"—and know it is true. You must always be mindful of this—especially now, when you are under attack.

For whatever ideological reason, this Administration put NEA in their crosshairs and made a conscious decision to exclude you from the education reform table—yet expects you to reform education. And, despite our continual efforts to engage and work with the Administration, we remain absent from their education table and targets of their wrath.

The so-called No Child Left Behind law (NCLB)—as it is currently crafted—will leave millions of children behind and do immeasurable harm to public education and public school educators. The fact that NEA has a laser focus on fixing and funding NCLB does not make us terrorists. And, because we have always stood fast for that which enhances educational opportunities for all children and students does not make us obstructionist, or segregationist, or a coalition of the whining.

Fortunately, since sounding the alarm about the pitfalls in the implementation and funding of this law, we have received a groundswell of support in our efforts.

NEA has worked to bring about common sense flexibility to the implementation of this law—such as the recent changes in regulations that affect special education students and students with limited English—and we expect to accomplish more positive results in the future. We appreciate all of the hard work of our NEA friends and colleagues who are committed to enlightening the Administration to the needs of children, students, and public education.

NEA's leadership answers to NEA's membership—and when I speak, I am the collective voice of teachers and educators who are in America's classrooms, focused on teaching America's children. Our members are in countries all around the world, teaching the children of America's servicemen and women. And, lest we forget, our members are members of the armed forces, fighting for the rights and privileges that we all share!

Thanks for being a member of Team NEA, and please know that I appreciate you for who you are and for what you do. This year will be a challenging one for all NEA members because there is so much at stake in this election and beyond. Energize, organize, and mobilize for children, students, and public education! You are the NEA!

NEA PRESIDENT REG WEAVER

PHOTO: SANDY SCHAEFFER

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That's just what thousands of classroom teachers have asked since the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was first introduced. You asked for help, and we gave it to you with *The IDEA Survival Guide from* the NEA Professional Library. Now in its second printing, the revised edition follows the same easy question-and-answer format and leads you through a number of scenarios to address your most pressing concerns. In straightforward, reader-friendly language, this book demystifies IDEA by:

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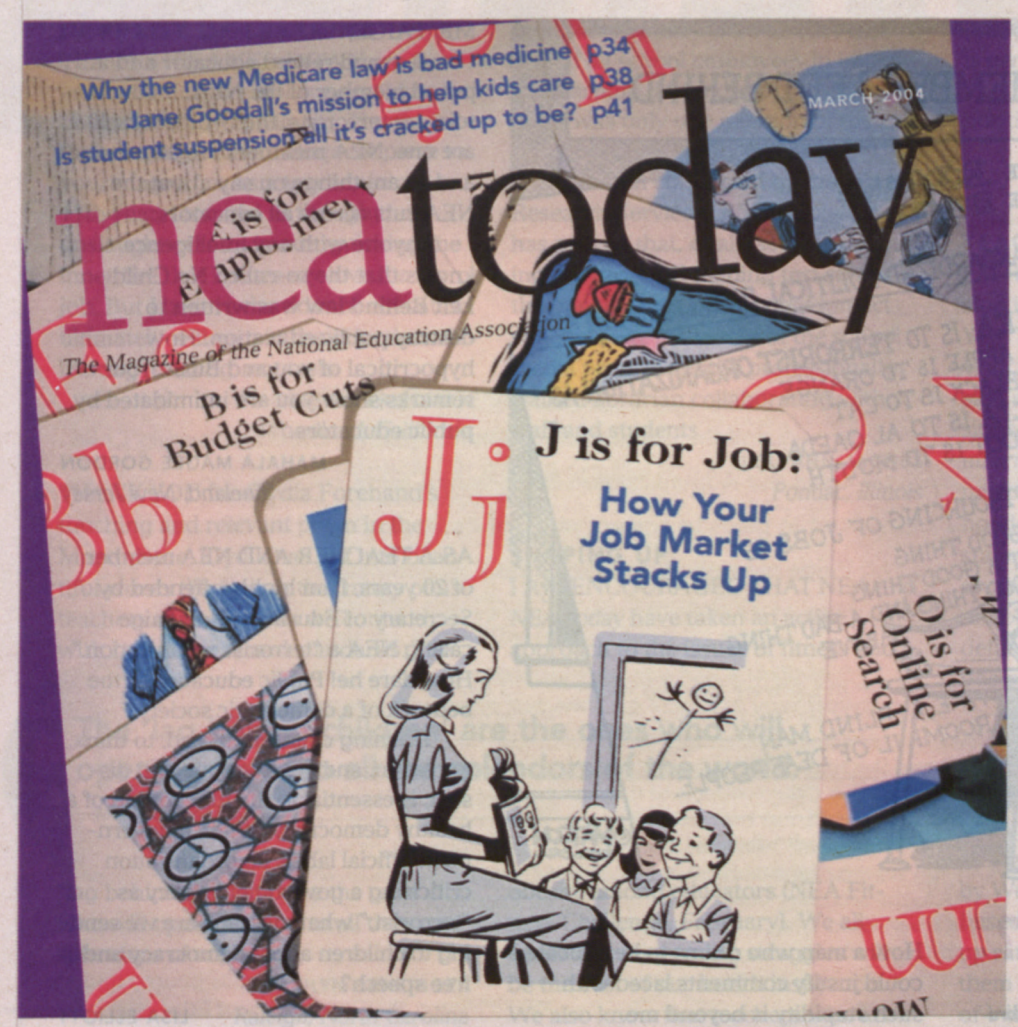
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The Magazine of the National Education Association
B is for Budget Cuts
J is for Job:
How Your Job Market Stacks Up
O is for Online Search

## The Job Hunt

I just finished reading "J is for Job" from the March issue of *NEA Today* and I love it! I am a senior elementary education student at Henderson Regional Campus of Murray State University in Kentucky. I will graduate in two months. This article could not have come at a better time for me. This is the time that I am not only student teaching, but also refining my résumé. Basically, *the hunt is on!*

When I returned to school two years ago to pursue my lifelong dream of becoming a teacher, I also was answering "the call" to fulfill what had been trumpeted as a huge teacher shortage. I have studied hard and tried to stay active in my Association to become the best teacher that I can possibly be, only to find that the "teacher shortage" has changed into a stale market where jobs are few and far between. Where are all those jobs that would happen from retirees and increasing student numbers?

This article helped me refocus and realize that the jobs are out there! I just have to be more flexible, adaptable, and industrious. Thank you *NEA Today* for calming my fears and giving me, a soon-to-graduate NEA Student Program member, the tools I will need to secure a position in what I *know* is the right profession for me.

MISTI WEDDING-McMICHEN
*Henderson, Kentucky*

### NOT SUCH A BARGAIN

I AM TRULY SORRY teachers are becoming aware that Wal-Mart isn't the bargain store they once thought it was ("Everyday Low Standards," March). But, I am even sorrier that it took so long for that knowledge to sink in. Wal-Mart has not changed its business practices from its inception. When Wal-Mart invaded our town several years ago, colleagues couldn't believe that I preferred our hometown merchants. ("But they are more expensive," they cried.) They did not care to hear that Wal-Mart's predatory pricing practices were hurting our local business owners—the same business owners that all of our school-sponsored, fund-raising operations visited. It would take more than one hand to count the businesses that have either closed or downsized since Wal-Mart arrived. When Wal-Mart has destroyed all of your local businesses, where will you do *all* of your shopping—and will it still be cheaper?

DEANNA SCHLENZ
*Fremont, Nebraska*

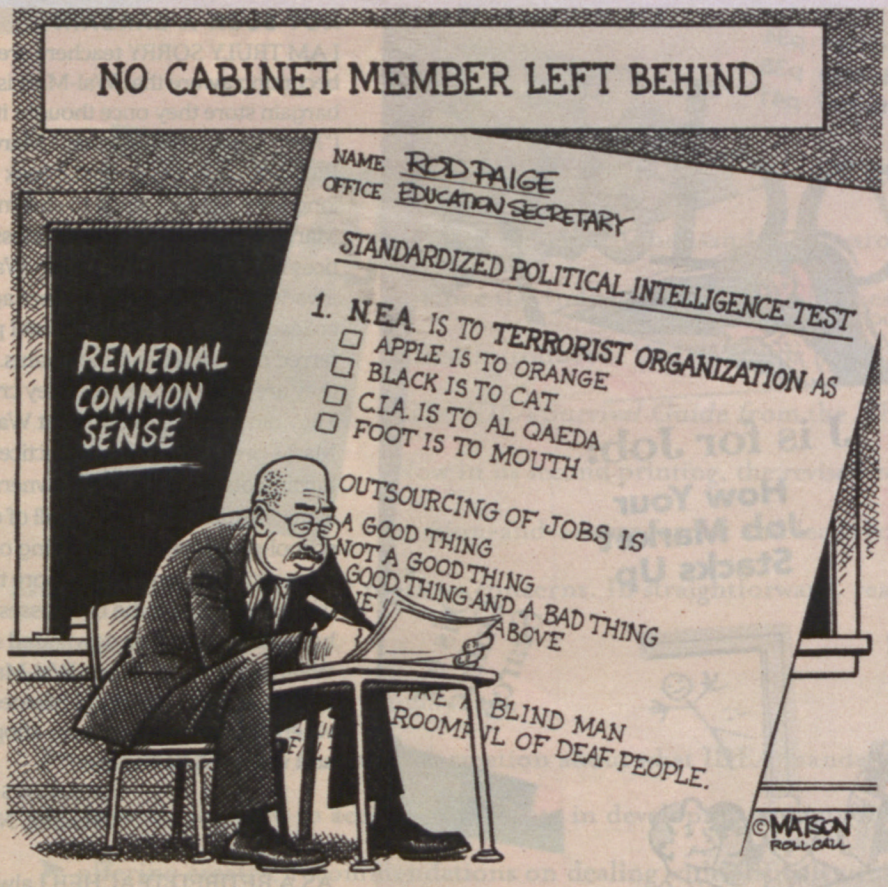
AS A RETIRED TEACHER I always enjoy reading the *NEA Today,* but two articles in the March issue were so compelling I had to share them with my husband. "Everyday Low Standards," the solidarity article about Wal-Mart, led us both to boycott Wal-Mart even though it is our closest store. And "Medi-Scare," the health benefits article, confirmed our worst suspicions, especially for my husband who has yet to retire. He was counting on those benefits to help us enjoy our retirement. Thanks for the information.

CAROL FINGER
*Eureka, Missouri*

### BUILDING A BETTER WORLD

THANK YOU SO MUCH for publishing the article about Jane Goodall ("Torchbearer," March). It is so important to teach our children compassion for the Earth and to respect all beings. With programs like Roots and Shoots, we empower our children and give them hope that they can make a difference in the world. They develop positive self esteem, a purpose, and a more loving and tolerant attitude.

TERRY BRODSKY
*Acton, Massachusetts*




# He Said What?

**Editor's Note: The characterization in February of NEA as a "terrorist organization" by Department of Education Secretary Rod Paige (see UpFront, page 10) spurred an avalanche of letters from members. Some found their way to *NEA Today*, others to the White House and Congress, still others to Paige himself. Here's a sampling, the first from a social studies teacher now fighting in Iraq. For more, visit www.nea.org/presscenter/supportnea.html.**

I WAS DISTURBED TO READ the recent comments by Mr. Rod Paige. First, and foremost, I am offended by the comparison to terrorists because, as I write this, I am currently fighting the terrorists that the NEA is being compared to as a soldier supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom.

How one could compare our organization to people and groups that attack with such disgrace and dishonor is more than this soldier can comprehend.

Each day the horrors of war are committed by the acts carried out by the faceless cowardice of terrorists. How a man who claims to be educated could justify comments laced with such stupidity is beyond me.

SGT. MARK SUCKFIELD
*McKeesport, Pennsylvania*

IF EDUCATION SECRETARY Rod Paige is going to pontificate about what's needed to "fix" the system, he should at the very least model dignified behavior. Labeling the NEA a "terrorist organization" is an example of hate speech. Most teachers would be fired or suspended for using similar language in their classrooms.

Mr. Paige's divisive proclamations reek of one whose life is disengaged from the whole of the human experience. Rather than condemn the man for this, I pity him.

JOEL GILLMAN
*Bellingham, Washington*

> **How one could compare our organization to groups that attack with such disgrace and dishonor is more than this soldier can comprehend.** —SGT. MARK SUCKFIELD

MR. PAIGE,
I am a proud retired educator and a proud member of the NEA. If educators are terrorists, then you yourself are one. NEA members are educators and so anything you say about the NEA cuts across all educators.

Anyone with any intelligence knows that the so-called No Child Left Behind law was written to destroy public education. How hypocritical of you and Bush. Your remarks show you are intimidated by public educators.

MAHALA MAGEE GORDON
*Vineland, New Jersey*

AS A TEACHER AND NEA member of 20 years, I am highly offended by Secretary of Education Rod Paige calling NEA a "terrorist organization." How dare he! Public education is the bedrock of a democratic society.

Teaching children to read, to think, to reason, and yes, to argue and dissent, is essential to the functioning of a healthy democracy. When a government official labels an organization criticizing a government policy as "terrorist," what message are we sending to children about democracy and free speech?

LISA ELLIOTT
*Overland Park, Kansas*

PAIGE'S REMARK WOULD have been ignorant and tasteless coming from anyone. Coming from the Secretary of Education, it is also incredibly reckless and irresponsible.

CATHERINE A. BOUDREAU
*Boston, Massachusetts*

NEA MEMBERS HAVE BEEN educating the public about the good and bad of the so-called No Child Left Behind law. Apparently the country's top education official believes anyone who does not agree with the law as it's written is guilty of inadequate patriotism.

KATHY PHELAN
*Boise, Idaho*

### IN PRAISE OF LEARNING

TEARS STREAMED DOWN my face as I read the incredible poem "Hurry, Hurry!" (Last Bell, March). Thank you for bringing such an eloquent piece to your magazine. As a teacher in my 11th year, I too feel as though the onslaught of tests is extinguishing the inner fire that ignites my love for my job. But I believe the tides of education ultimately will turn in the direction of lifelong learning, not tests.

JESSICA FRIEDMAN
*Woodland, California*

THANK YOU for Clydia Forehand's touching and relevant poem in the March issue. Clydia has put into beautiful words the feeling that many of us teachers experience as we contend with benchmarks and standards. The "lag behind children" are the ones who will open our eyes to all the splendors of our world.

MARILYN BENSINGER
*Raleigh, North Carolina*

**The 'lag behind children' are the ones who will open our eyes to all the splendors of the world.**
—MARILYN BENSINGER

### WHERE'S THE JOY?

IN "SAVING THE JOY" (February cover story) you ask whether we are harming our children's engagement in reading by overemphasizing testing. The unfortunate answer is yes.

I am a children's author, a first-grade teacher, and on the Executive Review Board for the International Reading Association. I am appalled at the state of affairs testing mania has caused. To make reading series "scientifically based," authors must follow tight phonetic requirements that create unnatural, uncreative texts that make stories boring. Plus, having to follow a script makes the teaching boring. Is it any wonder we are killing our students' love of reading?

JANE MEDINA
*Orange, California*

WHEN I SAW THE FRONT COVER of the February issue of *NEA Today*, I thought the article on NCLB and reading achievement would discuss the role of all school employees in improving learning. I was disappointed that there was only *one* mention of the role of school librarians.

Research conducted by the Library Research Service (LRS) of Colorado has proven that, of all factors impacting learning and reading test scores, the one that has a consistent impact state by state is the role of the school media program and a professionally trained librarian collaborating with staff and students.

LOU ANN JACOBS
*Pontiac, Illinois*

### SHAPING UP

I AM ENCOURAGED THAT NEA and *NEA Today* have taken an active approach to the issues of fitness and obesity among educators (NEA Fitness Challenge, February). We all know that the coming struggles will be the cost of our health insurance. We also know that teachers who are severely overweight and never exercise are at the highest risk for major medical illness. Thank you for bringing it to the forefront.

KAREN BALESTIERI
*Chico, California*

### THREE CHEERS

BRAVO TO ARNOLD GUNDERSEN, the mathematics teacher in Vermont, for his heartfelt and accurate depiction of the teaching profession (Last Bell, February). His article brought tears to my eyes! The part about dealing with a challenging student and looking up to see "23 other faces requiring my immediate attention" is right on target. I am photocopying his article and mailing it to all those friends and family who think I've got an easy job.

LESLIE CHAVEZ
*Downey, California*

THE ARTICLE FROM THE teacher who is a former nuclear physicist is fantastic! Many of my colleagues read it, copied it, and shared it with others. It is very confirming! I cannot think of another article that brought such a positive reaction among my colleagues.

KAREN R. MENSINGER
*Grapeview, Washington*

### TEACHER RATINGS

I'M RATHER PUZZLED by an omission in Michael Simpson's article "Are You 'The Worst Teacher Eva'?" (Rights Watch, February). There's no discussion of libel laws. For most professions, publishing negative, inaccurate information about someone's job performance could affect one's livelihood. The economic loss from such statements is part of the damages awarded in a lawsuit. Are teachers unable to use such laws to challenge defamatory postings by suing the posters and Web site operators?

CHARLES HAAS
*Randolph, New Jersey*

PERHAPS IT'S BECAUSE I'm a younger teacher or more used to technology, but I don't feel threatened at all by Web sites like RateMyTeachers.com. I used similar sites in college to look up ratings on professors and found them quite helpful. With the plethora of Web sites rating everything from movies to electronics, students need to learn how to sort the wheat from the chaff, so to speak. Having teacher-rating Web sites will give students a chance to analyze and post both the bad and the good about their teachers. You never know, the feedback may actually be beneficial to teachers.

KARI BLUFF
*King City, California*

## LET'S TALK

Share your ideas, comments, and opinions with *NEA Today* in one of four ways:

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Letters are edited for length and clarity.

# When Words Burn

**It's no secret that the Bush Administration has never taken fondly to NEA's slate of ideas about how to improve the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the so-called No Child Left Behind law. For two years the Administration has brushed aside criticism about the law's unfunded mandates and balked at pleas to correct many of its flaws. But when Department of Education Secretary Rod Paige recently described the 2.7 million-member Association as a "terrorist organization" because of its criticism, the depth of the animosity sizzled to the surface.**

**Paige made the charge** in a private meeting with governors, but he was quickly forced to fess up, recant, and reach out. Yet few were feeling the love, mainly because the secretary has been there before—not only with NEA ("the coalition of the whining," he once dubbed it), but with numerous other critics, whom he's called "nihilists" and compared to racial segregationists. Even in his "apology" to NEA, the secretary couldn't bring himself to call a truce, describing the Association's concerns as "obstructionist scare tactics" and attempting to draw a line between the leadership and teachers themselves.

But NEA members would have none of it. At a meeting last month between Paige and Teachers of the Year from across the country, North Carolina middle school teacher Melissa Ellis Bartlett sat next to Paige and discreetly slid a button to his side.

FREEZE!!! HANDS UP!!
EDUCATION SECRETARY ROD PAIGE SENT US!
WE'RE BREAKIN' UP YOUR LITTLE NEA TERRORIST CELL, MISS GRITSMACHER— IF THAT IS YOUR REAL NAME!!
Cc Dd Ee
GRADE 1 MISS GRITSMACHER
Universal Press Syndicate
2/24

"I *am* the NEA!" it roared.

It was a measure of just how charged members had become. NEA President Reg Weaver already had panned Paige's terrorist remark as "morally repugnant" and called on President Bush to ask for his resignation. The real work followed as members redoubled efforts to get the word out about the law's flaws. Thousands of e-mails poured into the White House, the Department of Education, and congressional offices, many pleading for true reform that helps kids.

As Arkansas Teacher of the Year Katherine Wright Knight put it after the meeting with the secretary, "It's really not about Secretary Paige. It's about a law that disrupts our classrooms and communities and labels our children and teachers failures." Added James Kerr, Oklahoma's Teacher of the Year: "The [testing provision of the] law fails to demonstrate the growth of students from the beginning of the year to the end. [All you get] is a snapshot." And that "huge flaw," says Lorynda Sampson, Colorado's top teacher, "ends up leaving many kids behind."

**There's not a teacher in the U.S. who doesn't live or breathe by the philosophy of leaving no child behind...** —DEBORAH SMITH

**GOT SOMETHING TO SAY** about ESEA? Visit www.nea.org/lac to contact your congressional reps and encourage support for NEA-backed legislation that makes it live up to its name. As Deborah Smith, Tennessee's Teacher of the Year reminds: "There's not a teacher in the U.S. who doesn't live or breathe by the philosophy of leaving no child behind—long before it was made a policy by this Administration."



CARTOON: CARLSON ©2004 MILWAUKEE SENTINEL. REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION OF UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

# 5 Ways to Kick Back—And Relax—During Spring Break

The sun is shining, the birds are singing, and everything is blooming. Spring has arrived! What better way to celebrate than with that ever-precious weeklong break. These ideas will help you maximize your downtime and recharge.

1. **RUN AWAY FROM HOME.** **Take advantage of last-minute travel deals and escape—to the beach, the mountains, or countryside. Or make a day trip to a nearby city and explore the local attractions.**
2. **STAY UP PAST YOUR BEDTIME.** **An entire week without a school night means there's no reason to set the alarm. So, if you like the nightlife or like to boogie, cut loose—or just catch the end of *The Tonight Show* for once.**
3. **GO GOURMET.** **When was the last time you had a civilized midday meal? Forget the brown bag and "do lunch" at your favorite eatery.**
4. **PUTTER AROUND THE HOUSE.** **Sure, you *could* repaint the bedroom or fix that leaky faucet. You could also just spend an afternoon on the sofa eating bon bons and catching up on your favorite soap.**
5. **CONNECT WITH YOUR KIDS.** **Challenge your son to a game of Monopoly, finger-paint with your daughter, or head to the zoo. Relaxing can be a family affair.**

59

[ Percent of people who believe TEACHER SALARIES ARE TOO LOW, according to a 2003 Phi Delta Kappa/ Gallup Poll. That's up from 33 percent in 1969.

# Leap of Faith

**SHOULD THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY** and public schools work together to improve the quality of children's lives—and if so, how? Those were just two of the questions representatives from NEA and the National Council of Churches USA (NCC) explored during a daylong interfaith symposium in Washington, D.C. Educators and religious leaders discussed ways to address the funding inequities and achievement gap between urban and suburban schools and teacher recruitment, among other topics.

"The religious community has a responsibility to become an advocate for public education," says the Rev. Oliver "Buzz" Thomas, former legal counsel for NCC and a presenter at the symposium. "This is not optional. It's commandment."

## Capitol Report

### Write It Off

With April 15 just a few days away, don't forget to claim all of those crayons, pencils, and glue sticks you bought for your classroom in 2003. It's all tax deductible, at least for now. In 2002, Congress enacted a $250 tax deduction for educators' out-of-pocket classroom supply expenses, but it expired at the end of last year. So, NEA is working with members of Congress to extend the deduction for another 10 years, increase it to $400, and expand it to include professional development expenses. More than 180 members of Congress have agreed to co-sponsor a bill in the House of Representatives. Is yours one of them? Find out by visiting www.nea.org/lac and let Congress know how much you spend each year on supplies. (The average teacher spends $443.)

### Teen Readers

Middle and high school struggling readers could soon get the help they need to learn to read. The House of Representatives has introduced legislation, which NEA supports, that would provide literacy coaches to students and staff at the secondary level. The goal? Build students' reading skills and help more of them graduate from high school. The Senate is considering a similar program. You can keep an eye on this plan and speak out on the needs of your students at www.nea.org/lac.

### Have a good tip?

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ILLUSTRATION TOP: ANN BOYAJIAN; BOTTOM: LAURA DESANTIS

# Fowl Play

**TYSON FOODS, INC.,** the world's largest supplier of chicken, beef, and pork, saw its earnings increase by a whopping 46 percent in the first quarter of this fiscal year. But that didn't deter the company from demanding a 10-point list of steep pay and benefit take backs from workers in its pepperoni-producing plant in Jefferson, Wisconsin.

Some 470 members of the United Food and Commercial Workers union (UFCW) were backed to the wall. Until January, they waged an 11-month strike—in the face of 300 "replacement" workers who crossed their picket line—before ratifying an inferior contract that included most of Tyson's take backs.

**THE CHOICE:** Settle the contract or watch strikebreakers use their right under federal law to vote out the union.

UFCW members must now continue their battle inside the plant, but they know they've rallied thousands of Wisconsin residents, including members and staff of the Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC), to their side. WEAC folks walked the line, spoke at plant gate rallies, and donated money, food, and even toys for strikers' kids during the holidays. Meanwhile, merchants, even those in rural Jefferson, pulled Tyson products from their shelves, neighbors brought coffee and doughnuts to the picket line, and members of other unions picketed alongside the strikers.

> We kept the union in there. They didn't bust us.
> —DAVE REED

The "world's largest protein producer" may have starved its Jefferson workers, for now, of a living wage, but their dignity is intact. "We kept the union in there," says UFCW steward Dave Reed. "They didn't bust us."

For more, go to www.ufcw.org/press_room/fact_sheets_and_backgrounder/factsontysons.cfm.

# Er, Smile? You're On Camera

**It sounds like something you'd find in *The Matrix* or read about in *1984*. But this isn't science fiction. For the first time ever, cameras that can recognize the faces of child predators and missing children have been installed in a public school.**

The Maricopa County Sheriff's Office in Arizona installed the equipment at Royal Palm Middle School in Phoenix, not because the school has experienced specific problems with sex offenders, says school principal Michael Christensen. It simply wanted to see how well the equipment would work in schools.

"Anything to create a safer environment for kids is a good development," he says.

The cameras, which cost between $3,000 and $5,000 and were paid for by a grant, scan the faces of people who enter the school. It then matches 28 different facial features to images stored in databases. The "stored" faces include those of known sex offenders, missing children, and alleged abductors. Individuals wanted for other crimes are not part of the system, so the school hasn't become a checkpoint for catching anyone and everyone who's on the lam.

But, if the cameras make a match, the sheriff's department receives a notification automatically.

Other images captured by the cameras, such as those of teachers and students coming and going, are not stored. And, so far, parents and staff seem "supportive," says Christensen.

For strangers who get flashed, though, "creepy" may be the better word.



ILLUSTRATION TOP: ROBIN JAREAUX; PHOTO BOTTOM: DIGITAL VISION

# Some Choice

**President George W. Bush may have been hard pressed to find money for arts education and drop-out prevention—and some 38 other education programs he eliminated in his FY 2005 budget. But he had no apparent problem unearthing $50 million for a national voucher program.**

It's hardly the first time Bush has funneled federal funds to the voucher movement. Since Bush took office, the Department of Education has doled out more than $75 million in grants to pro-voucher advocacy groups, according to People for the American Way, a pro-public education organization. The grants, many of them unsolicited, focused on educating the public about the school choice provisions of the reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the so-called No Child Left Behind law. In reality, though, the grants presented a not-so-veiled opportunity to tout the benefits of vouchers, championing them as a benefit for poor minority children.

Voucher advocates are misguided if they think such programs will help anyone, says Gabriela Lemus, national director of policy and legislation for the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), an NEA partner.

"The perception that vouchers create choice for parents and kids is erroneous," she says. "It really creates choice for private schools, which have the right to pick and choose who they will accept."

**3.2 million**

The number of STUDENTS expected to graduate high school in 2009.

# Charge It!

MORE THAN 20 PERCENT OF STUDENTS between the ages of 12 and 19 have their own credit card or access to a parent's. Hmm... so much for saving allowance.

## Global Takes

### No More Scarves

The French National Assembly has voted overwhelmingly to forbid girls from wearing Muslim head scarves in school, in an effort to make more of the country's 5 million Muslims accept France's secular culture in public institutions. The new law bans the wearing of any prominent religious symbol in public schools, including Jewish yarmulkes, large Christian crosses, and possibly Sikh turbans. It also provides for complete gender equality and coed gym classes. The law does not apply to France's publicly funded, private religious schools, though, most of which are Catholic. France's first Muslim school opened last fall.

### Strike the Hikes

University campuses in Western Europe have erupted in student strikes and demonstrations recently over who will pay for higher education. College is free in Europe, and students want to keep it that way, reports the *New York Times*. Students argue that charging tuition will discourage poorer students from applying. But cash-strapped governments across the continent want students to pay up.

"You should get higher education based on your academic abilities and not based on your ability to pay," says Edinburgh University student leader Will Garton. "Tuition fees don't lead to a more just and equitable society."

**Got something to say?**

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ILLUSTRATION TOP: DIGITAL VISION; BOTTOM: DEBRA SPINA DIXON

# College Bound

**The face of public education in the United States is changing—or, rather, changing complexion.**

**BY 2010,** students from ethnic minority groups will represent more than half of all high school graduates in many parts of the country, including the West, according to *Knocking at the College Door,* a study by The College Board, ACT, and the Western Interstate Commission of Higher Education. Schools in the South will see a comparable shift by 2014.

Chances are more of those students will go on to college as well. During the past 20 years, total minority enrollment in higher education has more than doubled—up from nearly 2 million students in 1980 to 4.3 million in 2000. But the gap in college participation rates between Caucasian and minority students has widened, according to the American Council on Education. From 1978 to 1980 about 30 percent of students of all races attended college. But, from 1998 to 2000, 46 percent of white high school graduates were in college, compared with only 40 percent of Blacks and 34 percent of Hispanics.

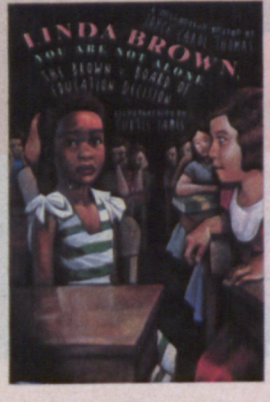
By 2010, more than 120,000 new PARAPROFESSIONALS will be needed in schools throughout the United States.

BOOK FOCUS

# No Longer Alone

**"The word *colored*...need not paint our lives. Indeed, by our own definition we were *dear colored people,* and the colors were the same as the love that our families and friends had for us....And so it was that we were able to spread dignity in the face of indignity, and dignity cannot really be taken away by someone else's poor choice of words."**

So writes Leona Nicholas Welch in the final story of *Linda Brown, You Are Not Alone: The Brown v. Board of Education Decision* (Jump At the Sun/Hyperion Books, 2003), a poignant collection of memories and essays paying tribute to the landmark court case. The book's other nine stories, all from noted children's authors, are equally compelling, each one reflecting on another aspect of segregation and the desegregation of public schools.




Author, poet, and former teacher Joyce Carol Thomas edits the collection, which includes selections from both African-American and Caucasian authors who speak with sometimes-painful honesty. Powerful pastel illustrations from artist Curtis James accompany each piece.

As educators honor the 50th anniversary of the *Brown v. Board* decision next month, they will find many teaching resources to use in the classroom (for a list of some, see page 55.) But those trying to capture the heart and soul of this era should take a look at this moving collection.



PHOTO TOP: DIGITAL VISION; ILLUSTRATION BOTTOM: CURTIS JAMES

# Teach Again? You Bet

If they had to do it again, 82 percent of new teachers still would become educators. That's the finding of *The Voice of the New Teacher*, a new survey from the Public Education Network, a coalition of community-based organizations that support public schools. Beginning educators enjoy teaching, according to the report, and they find their jobs much more satisfying than do their peers working in other professions.

**SO, THEN WHY** do nearly half of all new teachers leave the profession within the first five years? The word: poor working conditions. Large class sizes, inadequate resources, and endless paperwork combined with a lack of support, respect, and income force many newbies to move on, they report. And despite finding their work fulfilling—90 percent of new teachers believe they make a difference in their students' lives—many beginning educators feel isolated in their schools.

What will it take to keep these teachers at the head of the class? High-quality mentoring programs, more contact with administrators and fellow teachers, and ongoing support, say novice educators. (A new teacher handbook wouldn't hurt, either. It topped the survey's new teacher wish list.)

## [ NOBODY EVER TOLD ME ] Sparking Interest

As a first-year teacher, I went to a veteran colleague and asked for some advice about keeping my fifth-grade students' attention. "Mr. Barzso" showed me a simple science experiment to perform and told me to dispose of the materials in the school dumpster once I was finished. It sounded easy enough.

**THE FOLLOWING WEEK** I took my students to the sand pit where I had learned the experiment. I positioned a paper cup in the sand and placed two chemicals in it, just as Mr. Barzso had done. But, just when I thought things were going well, the reaction appeared to stop. So I threw the materials in the dumpster and took the students inside to discuss what should have happened.

Later that day, I attended a staff meeting where the school principal announced that the recycling dumpster had caught fire.

Mr. Barzso and I looked at each other and I sheepishly explained about the botched science experiment. "I guess I threw it in the wrong dumpster," I said. The entire staff, including my principal, burst out laughing. Apparently, the experiment worked after all, and my colleagues now call me, "Sparky."

—ANNA HALLOCK
*Fifth-grade teacher, Elgin, Illinois*

PHOTO TOP: NATHAN HAM; ILLUSTRATION BOTTOM: PAUL GILLIGAN

First 5 Years

# Two-Minute Tips

### Musical Mouse Pads

I am an elementary strings teacher. Cellos and basses have sharp endpins that slip on smooth surfaces. So, I ask colleagues to give me their discarded mouse pads, which make terrific endpin holders to keep the instruments in place.

—STEPHANIE GREENBERG
*Wayne, Pennsylvania*

### Now Serving Number...

I use numbered cards to organize students who need my individual attention. I laminate the cards and keep them in order in a basket. When I am busy talking to one student, other students can come up, take a card, and return to their seats instead of waiting in line. When I finish with one student, I call on the next number and a hand goes up to show me whom I will conference with next.

—LINDA GOLOMB
*Valencia, California*

### Daily Tip

When students walk into my driver education class they see the "Driving Tip of the Day" on the board, which they must write down in their notebooks. While they do this, they have time to settle down, and I can take attendance. Afterward, we discuss what the tip means. It is a great way to get class started without having to remind students to calm down.

—FRED DEUTCH
*Vernon, New Jersey*

**Got a story about your first year on the job?**

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# Lending A Helping Hand

**Covering life's necessities can be a tall order for members of the Special Education Employees Association (SEEA) in St. Louis County, Missouri. The average paraeducator in the district makes about $17,000 a year—hardly enough to make ends meet when it costs nearly $27,000 a year to care for a family of three in the area.**

"Most of our members have two or three jobs because they can't make it on their salary alone," says Sharon Canaday, vice president of SEEA, which serves paraprofessionals, certified occupational and physical therapy assistants, and sign language interpreters. So SEEA is crusading to get its members a livable wage. And the local is seeing results.

> I anticipate it will let the district see we have the community behind us.
> —SHARON CANADAY

In four years, membership has soared to 800 from 238, with about 150 joining in the past seven months, says UniServ Director Terri Coburn. Meanwhile, new and veteran members have increased their presence in the community by collecting items for the local homeless shelters and food pantries. The local hopes to rally additional community support this month with a petition signing.

"I anticipate it will let the district see we have the community behind us," says Canaday.

# Buckle Up!

**Tune in to your local PBS station on any given day, and you might catch a glimpse of students from Jim Wojcicehowski's broadcasting class talking about the good news of seat belt safety.**

The students from Corry Area High School in Pennsylvania snagged the national air time with a 30-second public service announcement (PSA) they created for an annual contest sponsored by an area insurance agency. As winners of the 2003 competition, the students got to star in a professionally produced version of their PSA, which aired on regional television in the fall. When the local PBS affiliate found out about the students' work on the production, it produced a 15-minute television segment about the students, which has since aired on PBS stations nationwide.

But Wojcicehowski's students haven't let fame go to their heads. They already are working on a new PSA about the dangers of drinking and driving for this year's contest.

"I wanted my students to gain a sense of pride in doing a major project like this, and to do it well," says Wojcicehowski, a social studies teacher. "They used all the skills and techniques of broadcasting that we have learned. I was very proud of my students when they won because I was proud of their finished product."

—Urmila Subramanyam



ILLUSTRATION TOP: CRAIG SMALLISH; PHOTO BOTTOM: GREG WOHLFORD

# Power Up Your Brain

## Need your brain to work better? Don't be a racist.

New research from Dartmouth University shows that people who harbor racist attitudes burn precious thought fuel trying not to appear prejudiced. Truly open-minded people get better mileage.

In a study, white participants completed a test that measured their racial bias, then interacted with an African American. Afterward, they worked on a simple, yet challenging, mental task.

**THE RESULT:** Those who registered higher degrees of racial bias had a harder time with the task. Did the interaction put their gray matter on "E?" Dr. Jennifer Richeson, a specialist in race-relations research at Dartmouth, thinks so. People with racial biases experience stress when they try to hide their true feelings, she says. And that stress wears out your brain, just like a strenuous workout exhausts your muscles. But more frequent workouts can build muscle strength, and people can overcome their biases by spending more time with members of different races, Richeson says.

The verdict? Becoming more mentally efficient could be as easy as freeing your mind.

—CHRIS KOTTERMAN

**84** Percent of **CHILDREN** ages 3 to 5 **READ TO** by a family member three or more times per week.

# Chew On This

**COULD GUM CHEWING (THE BANE OF TEACHERS AND SCHOOL CUSTODIANS EVERYWHERE) IMPROVE LEARNING?**

New York University dentistry professor Kenneth Allen hopes to find out.

Allen didn't plan on getting into the Bazooka business. He originally wanted to compare two different methods of teaching dental anatomy, but he couldn't find any funding. When he learned that chewing gum maker Wrigley might underwrite a study, Allen decided to let his students start smacking. Half of his students chewed sugarless gum while they studied, while the others went gumless. After three days of instruction, the gum-chewers scored, on average, a B-minus on a written test while the abstainers pulled only a C-plus.

Because only 56 students took part in the study—too few to be statistically meaningful—Allen's applied for another wad of funding for a larger follow-up.

## Smile

**As a family and consumer sciences teacher,** I constantly am amazed at my students' listening skills and cooking knowledge. I gave my eighth graders final directions for making soup and reminded them to peel the carrots and slice them into bite-size pieces. As I walked around the kitchen I saw a cutting board on the counter with a bunch of carrot slices on it. I then noticed one student with a vegetable peeler in one hand and a slice of carrot in the other. I watched as this student peeled each carrot slice. Needless to say, it took a long time to get those carrots ready for the soup.

—DIXIE ELMES
*Westminster, Maryland*

**Our freshmen were working on a project** in which they had to find biographical information about Mark Twain from a source other than an encyclopedia. I noticed two girls working diligently, but they appeared perplexed. As I coached them through their thought process, I reminded them that thinking about a person's nationality, occupation, and life could help them determine where to find relevant information.

"So," I asked them, "what can you tell me about Mark Twain?" They looked at each other blankly before one said, "Isn't he Shania's husband?"

—TERRY BURNS
*Bluffton, Indiana*

**Have a funny school story, anecdote, or vignette you'd like to share?**

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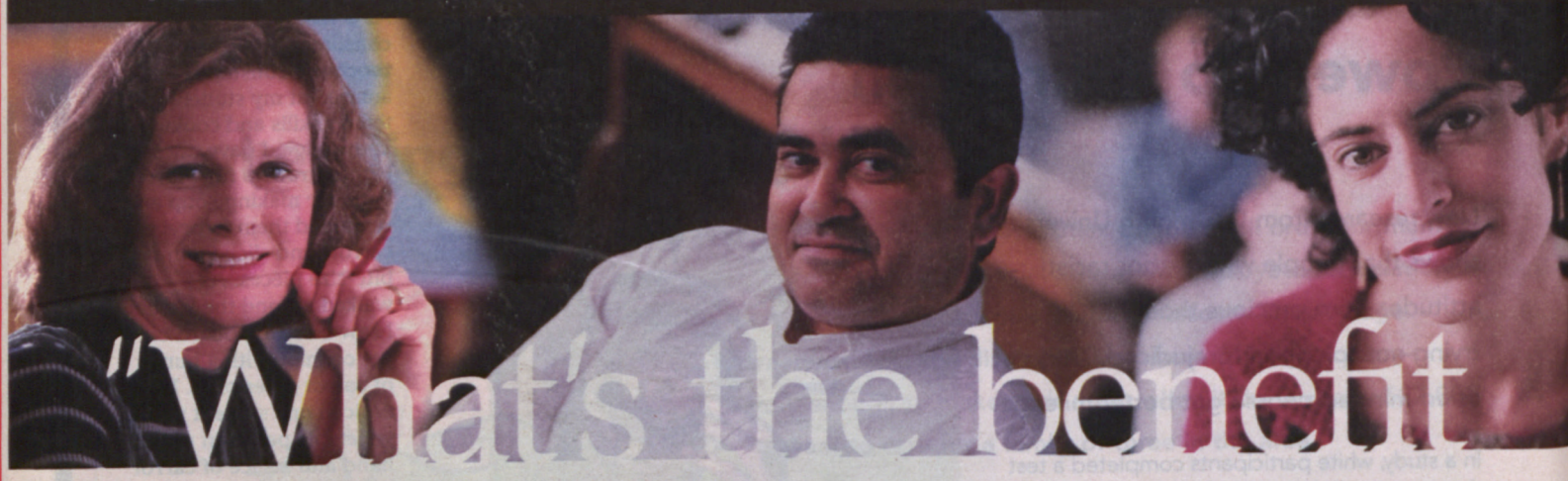

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VBNT0404

## California

The longest supermarket strike in history ended in February, when 70,000 members of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) union in Southern California ratified a new three-year agreement with three grocery chains.

Helping the UFCW achieve this settlement, which preserves affordable health care, was the solid picket line support of other unions—including the **California Teachers Association (CTA).**

While its members joined the lines and many of its local chapters "adopted" struck stores, CTA ran a statewide radio campaign urging food shoppers to spend their dollars elsewhere. "Grocery workers are part of our communities and their children attend our schools," stressed CTA President Barbara Kerr in one radio spot. "These workers are on strike because giant corporations are trying to destroy their health care."

"If profitable supermarket giants can launch an attack on health care benefits, then every employer is sure to follow," said UFCW President Doug Dority. "We must have national health care reform."

## Nevada

The **Nevada State Education Association (NSEA)** is collecting signatures to qualify a November ballot initiative that, if approved by voters, would require the state the fund public education at the national average.

"We would not presume to tell the governor and legislature how to pay for the increase in per-pupil funding," said NEA President Terry Hickman. "However, we believe it is their job to make such decisions. We expect there will be a mix of budget re-prioritizations, cuts, and/or dedication of new revenue—and we anxiously await the debate."

## Wisconsin

A bill that would make subcontracting a "non-mandatory" subject of bargaining came under fire from **Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC)** negotiations specialist Greg Spring during a state senate hearing in January.

Spring reminded lawmakers that firms bidding on school support services often "lowball" their offers, "only to raise their prices once their hands are in taxpayers' pockets. While costs are going up, the quality of service is going down."

Profit-driven subcontractors cut costs by "cutting corners," Spring explained. "They hire inexperienced workers over whom the local governments have no control, because, after all, these workers are no longer their employees."

And ultimately, the WEAC staffer said, subcontracting diminishes school districts' ability to screen, train, and manage "quality employees who will be working with our children."

## Massachusetts

Governor Mitt Romney's proposal to eliminate $12.6 million in funding for school-based health programs is "shortsighted and irresponsible" and will lead to nurse layoffs, said **Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA)** President Catherine Boudreau. She cited the *growing* need for health services, stemming from factors such as mainstreaming of special needs students and the increasing number of "social morbidities" and kids without health insurance.

"As educators, we know that children must be ready to learn," Boudreau stressed. "School nurses are in a unique position to help students achieve maximum health and attain the knowledge and skills needed to maintain good health throughout their lives."

## Virginia

As **Virginia Education Association (VEA)** leaders publicly join with partners in the Virginia Education Coalition to call for a "fair share" of state funding for education, VEA members are speaking about the school funding crisis in town meetings held across the state by the Alliance for Virginia's Students.

VEA members are telling taxpayers about teachers who must work three to five extra jobs to survive, textbook shortages, and outdated, leaky schools.

And more.

"Are you surprised that one of every three new teachers leaves within three years?" Loudoun County teacher Claire Scholz said at one town meeting. "Virginia is like a deadbeat parent who is delinquent on child support payments.

"Virginia needs to restructure its tax code," Scholz concluded, "and hold itself accountable to high standards that equal those for teachers and students."

## Tennessee

When activists from the **Tennessee Education Association's (TEA)** "bargaining" locals conferred in November, talk quickly turned to the value of collective negotiations with school employers.

Bargaining gives educators the "freedom of expression" necessary to solve professional problems, said Murfreesboro local President Cathrine Gordon. "Without negotiations, our employment could degenerate into nothing more than a form of servitude!"

TEA President Judy Beasley stressed that bargaining locals can be directly involved in local decisions on implementation of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). In districts where bargaining does not take place, she said, "employees are not guaranteed any voice in those decisions."

The bottom line: You either bargain or you beg.

# Where There's Power in Numbers

An Alabama local's membership drive and new spirit of solidarity influences school district policies.

**NEA LOCAL AFFILIATE:**

**Sumter County (Alabama) Education Support Professionals (SCESP)**

**THE NUMBERS:**

After two rounds of state-mandated budget cuts depleted its ranks in the 2002–03 school year, SCESP mounted an aggressive drive that boosted membership by more than 25 percent—to a total of 144.

**THE BACKGROUND:**

When Alabama's education budget shrinks, things just get worse in high-poverty Sumter County—and ESPs are usually the first to feel the ill effects. Upon taking office in July 2003, SCESP President Gwendolyn Carter, a school secretary, realized that the steady erosion of ESP jobs, combined with

Sumter County ESP President **Gwendolyn Carter,** second from left, talks union with bus drivers, from far left, **Isiah Eades, Rodney Bryant, Jewel Ramsey, Robert Campbell, Sandra Turner** (local recruiter), and **George Brown.**

falling membership, would soon leave her local powerless as a representative of support professionals.

"Even in the best of times, we can't always win," says Carter. "But we were seeing both declining membership and very little membership participation in school board affairs."

Last autumn, Carter launched a membership recruitment campaign to rebuild the Association's strength. She not only took a hands-on role in recruitment, she also hired a recruitment coordinator, Sandra Turner, a 12-year Sumter County school bus driver.

"To rebuild our local, we needed to focus on more than numbers," says Carter. "But we had to start with numbers, and I knew that Sandra could command the respect necessary to bring people into our ranks."

Since beginning her new job last fall, Turner has lured 30 new members to the Association—boosting membership levels higher than before the two rounds of job cuts.

"We still have six ESPs who aren't in the Association, but that's not a bad ratio—and I'm still working on those six," says Turner.

**ATTRACTING MEMBERS:**

It takes more than persistence to recruit a new Association member. Turner says the secret is really a matter of education.

"SCESP represents members effectively, but nonmembers have often never thought about it," she says. "When I approach potential members, I ask them what they plan to do if they ever have trouble on the job: Go it alone? Hire a lawyer? Take on the school district? For the small amount members pay in dues, they have a very good organization backing them up. I think many more ESPs are aware of their vulnerability since the job cuts."

**BUILDING A GROUP IDENTITY:**

Building membership was just the local president's first challenge. The second: improving the Association structure to facilitate greater communication among members, building reps, and officers—and greater interaction between officers and the community. The third challenge: getting members involved.

"We needed an active membership," says Carter. "To get that, we needed to let every member know how much could be accomplished through group involvement. So we worked to build our identity. We designed a new local logo and put it on shirts that we unveiled at a special ESP night in November.

"We brought in county, city, and school officials, along with Alabama Education Association representatives to talk to our ESPs about their jobs," she adds, "And we talked to them about the change they could bring about by becoming 'active' members rather than 'just' members."

**WINNING CHANGE:**

The message of involvement hit home with SCESP members. Since the November event, many have been regularly attending school board meetings and participating in policy decisions affecting the county.

In a major display of solidarity, Association members recently formed an overflow crowd at a meeting held by the county commissioner. They complained that the school district had been shortchanged funds that should have gone to staff salaries. Under pressure, the commissioner agreed to give up the disputed money, and some of the lost ESP jobs have been restored.

Turner says members she has signed up are responding positively to the Association's new stature. "They feel that acting as a group is making a big difference," she says. "They feel they are real participants in the education process, and they feel more dignity."

—MATT SIMON

**FOR MORE**, contact Alabama Education Association UniServ Director Tommy Green at Tommyg@alaedu.org.

PHOTO: CARMEN SISSON

# The Kids Can't Wait

In Maryland, public school supporters rally for full funding of a landmark school finance plan. The message? A promise is a promise.

Maybe it was a sign. As thousands of public education supporters jammed a crowded square outside the Maryland State House to demand full funding of the state's landmark school finance law, a statue of legendary jurist Thurgood Marshall loomed over the proceedings.

Marshall, lead attorney in the *Brown v. Board of Education* school desegregation case and renowned for his commitment to equal rights, no doubt would have seen the justice in the crowd's demands that all children attend schools that are adequately and equitably funded.

Two years ago, Maryland lawmakers approved the groundbreaking Thornton commission plan to equalize school spending and ensure that every student has access to an adequate public school education. Some of the $1.3 billion in new money will go to raise the per-pupil state aid in poorer districts; other dollars will go toward full-day kindergarten and preschool programs for disadvantaged students beginning in 2007.

But some politicians are now balking at fully funding the plan. Governor Robert Ehrlich's proposed budget would cut $47 million of Thornton funding, and he has plans to make up the state's revenue shortfall with legalized slot machine gambling.

That's why a crowd estimated at 12,000 teachers, education support professionals, parents, students, and community and union activists set out to shake up the State House in Annapolis in a nighttime rally February 9. Their goal? Making sure the politicians honor their commitment to funding equity.

NEA President Reg Weaver spoke at the rally, drawing sustained cheers from the crowd when he thundered, "Can we afford to adequately and equitably fund public education? That's the wrong question. The question is: Can we afford not to?"

Pat Foerster, president of the Maryland State Teachers Association (which helped organize the rally), noted that in the last state election, "politicians from the governor on through the system made the promise to fully fund the Thornton legislation to give every child in Maryland a chance to compete [for high-tech jobs]. We're here to say...it's time to end the rhetoric. A promise is a promise."

The marchers, many of whom arrived in more than 200 buses from around the state, walked about a mile from the U.S. Naval Academy stadium to the State House. They toted homemade placards (such as one favorite: "Education = Homeland Security") and chanted slogans ("2-4-6-8, we need funds to educate").

Janet Baird, who teaches art to grades 1–5 in Howard County, Maryland, said failure to fully fund the Thornton plan "will affect every program that we're trying to implement with the students. The students are the important ones, and they're why we're here, but we're always the last ones to be thought about."

Baird carried a sign saying, "Cuts to education will leave every child behind," and the reference to the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law was intentional. Baird and others said increased NCLB mandates without additional resources makes funding the Thornton plan even more critical.

The *Baltimore Sun* agreed. In an editorial published just prior to the rally, the *Sun* said that changes in the federal education law "heighten the demand for the type of school improvement that state money can buy," such as smaller class sizes, all-day kindergarten, preschool for poor children, better-trained teachers, and enrichment programs. The paper concluded that "the right thing to do hasn't changed."

NEA President **Reg Weaver** charged up a crowd of 12,000 rally-goers—including many students—fighting for equitable school funding.

Passing the Thornton plan was historic; fully funding it will ensure that generations of Maryland children reap its benefits. During his remarks to the crowd, Weaver beckoned to Marshall's statue and noted that this spring marks the 50th anniversary of the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling. "We would best honor Thurgood Marshall's memory and the spirit of *Brown* by keeping the promise," Weaver said. "We should not be satisfied to only celebrate our history; we need to make our history....We haven't come this far to turn back now."

—JOHN O'NEIL

**FOR MORE** about the drive for equitable funding in Maryland—or to view rally pictures—go to www.mstanea.org.

PHOTOS: SANDY SCHAEFFER

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# 'Under God' Under Attack

## Will the Pledge of Allegiance be expelled from schools? As the Supreme Court decides, NEA reiterates its position.

Michael Newdow is a doctor, a lawyer, and a self-described Reverend of the First Amendmist Church of True Science. In March, he stepped up to the podium before eight justices of the U.S. Supreme Court and argued, on behalf of his 9-year-old daughter, that the Pledge of Allegiance should be banned from public schools.

Will he win? It's highly unlikely, but he has so far. In a controversial decision handed down in June 2002, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that school sponsorship of the pledge violates the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment.

The court reasoned that the phrase "under God" conveys an improper government endorsement of religion.

"A profession that we are a nation 'under God,'" the court ruled, "is identical, for Establishment Clause purposes, to a profession that we are a nation 'under Jesus,' a nation 'under Vishnu,' a nation 'under Zeus,' or a nation 'under no God.'"

The phrase "under God" did not appear in the original version of the pledge adopted by Congress in 1942. It was added by an act of Congress in 1954 to distinguish the United States from the "godless" Communist countries.

Newdow does not claim that the Elk Grove Unified School District in California, where his daughter attends school,

> **NEA DOES NOT BELIEVE that the inclusion of the words 'under God' in the Pledge of Allegiance poses a threat to the principle of separation of church and state.**
>
> —POLICY ADOPTED BY THE NEA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

requires students or teachers to recite the Pledge; the challenged practice is voluntary. In fact, the Supreme Court ruled in 1943 that compulsory recitation of the pledge in school is unconstitutional.

Rather, Newdow argues that even though his daughter was not required to recite the pledge, she was harmed by being forced to "watch and listen" as her teacher led her classmates "in a ritual proclaiming that there is a God, and that ours is 'one nation under God.'"

Less than a week after the Ninth Circuit's decision, the NEA Board of Directors voted to "support the Pledge of Allegiance as it is now written." The policy also states that "NEA does not believe that the inclusion of the words 'under God' in the Pledge of Allegiance poses a threat to the principle of separation of church and state."

In line with the Board's policy, NEA filed an amicus brief last December urging the Supreme Court to uphold the pledge in its current form.

The brief argues that pledging allegiance to the flag is a "patriotic observance, not a religious exercise," and that the phrase "under God" is a "ceremonial reference to our nation's religious heritage" akin to the references to God in the national anthem, the Declaration of Independence, Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, and our national motto, "In God We Trust."

If the Court agrees with Newdow, then even the voluntary recitation of the pledge in public schools would be prohibited.

Newdow is predicting victory. "This is the easiest case they've ever had," he told PBS. "If you look at all the case law, if you look at the principles they've enunciated in the past, there's no doubt the Ninth Circuit made the right decision."

But most court watchers agree there is little doubt that the Supreme Court will uphold the pledge.

The current justices have proven sensitive to public opinion, and the lower court decision declaring the pledge unconstitutional was strikingly unpopular. A *Newsweek* poll found that 87 percent of Americans support inclusion of the phrase "under God" in the pledge, and the House of Representatives voted 400-7 to condemn the court's ruling.

Even more telling, however, is the decision by Justice Antonin Scalia to recuse himself from hearing the case after publicly criticizing the Ninth Circuit's decision at a Virginia rally for "religious freedom." Few experts believe that Scalia would have agreed to sit this one out if he thought there was the slightest chance that the High Court would side with Newdow.

A decision by the Court is expected the last week in June.

—MICHAEL D. SIMPSON
*NEA Office of General Counsel*

PHOTO: CREATAS

# Para Quality: Not So Simple Anymore

## A local and district work to get paraeducators 'highly qualified' under federal law.

As a paraeducator in a challenging high school special ed class, Lynn Williams knows she's more than an "aide." Not only does she help English/world history teacher Richard Smith reinforce key classroom concepts, she's his "eyes and ears" in a job that calls for patience, understanding, and skills not measured by a paper-and-pencil test.

"I'm a confidant, a mentor, and a parent rolled into one," says this five-year paraeducator in the Redlands Unified School District, east of Los Angeles.

So how does a para like Williams know "officially" that she is qualified to assist in a Title I classroom under the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the so-called No Child Left Behind law? The law says that by January 2006 Title I paras hired before January 2, 2002, must either hold an associate's degree, complete two years of college, or pass a "rigorous" state or local assessment that demonstrates their ability to assist in the instruction of reading, writing, and math.

Unfortunately, the federal government has failed to insist that states provide all three of these options, or that states cover any related out-of-pocket costs for paras trying to meet the demands of the law. This, predicts Pennsylvania ESP activist Pat Tozer, could spell bad news down the road.

"When the 2006 deadline is past, and 'unqualified' paras don't have jobs," says Tozer, also a member of the NEA Board of Directors, "districts and states may blame it on a 'federal regulation' that supercedes both state law and bargained contracts."

Paras and their local affiliates "need to make sure their members aren't in danger if states or districts aren't doing their job," she adds. "We must continue to be vigilant."

Fortunately, there are locals to turn to for inspiration. In Redlands, for example, the 600-member Redlands Education Support Professionals Association (RESPA) uses its strong working relationship with administrators to advocate for humane implementation of the law.

In June 2003, the parties signed an agreement that spells out ESEA's three options for para certification and commits the district to developing an assessment using "all available information" to "comply in good faith" with the law.

Getting Title I paras ESEA-qualified now has become a labor-management priority.

With RESPA's support, the district adopted a written para assessment (similar to the ETS ParaPro exam) used by a consortium of Southern California districts. And the district is sponsoring workshops to prepare paras for the quarterly test, which focuses on math, reading, language arts, and classroom management skills.

For paras who prefer the higher ed option, RESPA and the district negotiated "professional growth" stipends for pursuit of an associate's degree, up to $1,563 a year.

Quite simply, "We're very vocal on professional development opportunities for our members," says RESPA President Paula Monroe, a high school secretary on union leave.

So determined is this NEA local affiliate to make paras ESEA-qualified that it has begun organizing its own test prep workshops, supplementing those of the district. It all started when Lynn Williams, who is also RESPA director at-large for paras, recruited math teacher Chris Borkgren to donate time and space after hours at Redlands East Valley High School to sharpen paras' math skills.

Her goal now is to line up more teachers in more schools to help prepare all 148 of the district's paras for the test. "It's in their best interest to help us," Williams stresses.

"The 'highly qualified' para issue will become a teachers' issue if we start losing paras in 2006," says Paula Monroe, who is also an NEA Board member from California. "That loss will impact workload and educational quality."

No para should feel "left behind" by ESEA, Williams concludes. "Don't wait for someone to give you information," she advises other paras. "Contact your Association and your school board for information and ask your district this: I have to become 'highly qualified' under the law. What are you going to do to help me?"

—DAVE WINANS

High school math teacher **Chris Borkgren,** right, coaches **Nina Hansen** for the Redlands school district's written paraeducator assessment.

PHOTO: BOB RIHA JR.

**FOR MORE** on paras and ESEA, go to www.nea.org/esphome/issues/ esp-for-paras.html.

**More ESP stories in this issue:**


- **Missouri special ed employees fight for a living wage – *Page 16***
- **School subcontracting under fire in Wisconsin – *Page 19***
- **Meet Illinois ESP and Renaissance man Dave Arnold – *Page 51***

# Mining for Excellence

## This Colorado local has just the right formula for growing National Board Certified Teachers.

Paige Dersham, in her 10th year teaching at Park Hill Elementary in Denver, Colorado, had pretty much exhausted her bag of tricks—yet her student Malcolm (not his real name) still lagged behind his classmates and just couldn't get motivated. Dersham had tried giving the fifth grader more time for tests, shorter assignments, and increased one-on-one help.

Nothing seemed to make a difference.

Then Dersham herself went "back to school."

She learned about the process of becoming a National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT) from a newsletter published by the Denver Classroom Teachers Association (DCTA). This activist local provides a wealth of support for members seeking Board Certification—and it shows. DCTA boasts the highest number of NBCTs (36) in Colorado.

Several factors account for DCTA's successful support of Board Certification—starting with its contract with the Denver public schools. The district and DCTA together pay $1,500 toward the NBCT fee (approximately $2,300 per candidate) for up to five Denver teachers each year. In addition, teachers who gain Board Certification get bumped up one lane in their pay scale (which can mean an increase of $2,500 or more) or a boost of 7 percent if they're on the doctorate schedule.

The DCTA support framework includes pre-candidate and candidate courses run in partnership with the University of Colorado-Denver. Monthly workshops that enable candidates to confer—and commiserate—about their projects are held with the Colorado Education Association (CEA).

The DCTA also puts a premium on having a mentor, especially someone at a comparable grade and content level. "It's the heart of our program," explains Jane Goff, CEA vice president. "We try not to let anyone do this alone."

Such support is well-deserved, because the workload for candidates is challenging. Applying for Board Certification requires hundreds of hours of research and writing, squeezed into spare nights and weekends. Candidates must arrange to videotape their interactions with students and prepare step-by-step analyses of their teaching efforts. Some liken it to performing the entire workload needed for a master's degree in only five or six months.

Clearly, there are concrete benefits to Board Certification, like higher pay and better job opportunities. Yet Denver teachers say the heightened sense of professionalism and respect they receive should not be overlooked.

**Paige Dersham** says the arduous process of becoming a National Board Certified teacher helped sharpen her skills.

"It's similar to a CPA (certified public accountant) or a lawyer taking the bar exam," says Connie White, a kindergarten teacher who earned her Board Certification in 2000. "I always knew I was a good teacher. I wanted something to show other people I was a good teacher."

And, of course, there are the many profound "intangibles" derived from sharpening teaching skills and probing into areas where there is room for growth. "I'd always thought of myself as a reflective teacher," says Dersham. "Going through the National Board process, I found that I'd only been skimming the surface."

When she jumped into the certification qualifying process, Dersham's classroom became her assignment. Her students became her homework. And something clicked—for Dersham and for Malcolm.

At the outset of her NBCT quest, Dersham recognized she needed to let students know about the portfolio she was assembling. Malcolm, to her surprise, insisted that his work be included.

"Then you're going to have to buckle down and give me some," she told him.

Up to that point, Malcolm had rarely completed an assignment. Paige assigned the class to write a piece from the viewpoint of an endangered species.

Malcolm chose tigers. He produced a first draft and read it aloud. Classmates made suggestions. Malcolm re-worked the piece several times. Dersham scrupulously recorded each developmental stage in her portfolio, along with her detailed reflections on the effort to coax him toward proficiency. She was learning. So was he.

"Now you know that this life is hard for me," wrote Malcolm in the concluding paragraph of his account as an endangered tiger. "I have scientists coming for questions."

It wasn't hard to figure out where he got the notion of scientists asking questions.

—BOB KATZ

**FOR MORE** on the DCTA's efforts, contact DCTA President Becky Wissink (bwissink@nea.org). Learn about becoming a Board Certified Teacher at www.nbpts.org.

PHOTO: DAVID ZALUBOWSKI

# THE FIX

The hue and cry over the landmark federal education law has only gotten more fervent in the two years since its passage—and some of the loudest voices are coming from the very lawmakers who crafted it. Is there hope for the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the so-called No Child Left Behind law? Can it be repaired to live up to the spirit of its name?

**NO QUESTION.** In just the last few months, in fact, the Bush Administration has succumbed to enormous pressures from a hosts of interests, including NEA, by making notable changes to the law's regulations—changes activists hope will work in the interest of students and teachers, not against them. But such fixes have come in fits and starts. And the unpredictability, not to mention the pace, of the reform is now testing the patience of many who have been demanding it since the law was signed in 2002.

Not only have congressional lawmakers introduced a rack of NEA-backed bills aimed at making the law more flexible (see "Take Action," page 35), more than a dozen state legislatures—some with Republican majorities—have passed bills and resolutions from at least one of their chambers urging immediate repairs. And more states join the protest almost every week. (See "Missing Moola," page 38.)

"The debate over *whether* ESEA needs to be fixed is over," says NEA chief lobbyist Joel Packer. "The issue now is how it to fix it—and whether those changes will be meaningful and timely." So far, Packer adds, "we've made lots of headway. But we have a long way to go, and mobilization will be the key to more success."

**It's as if you were to take the temperature of everybody in a hospital waiting room, and then take away the medicine from those with the highest temperatures and threaten to hit them.**

—GARY ORFIELD
HARVARD CIVIL RIGHTS PROJECT

Why mobilize? What makes this law with the noble-sounding name still so problematic?

Simply put, say educators, many of its provisions turn great ideas into bad practice. Consider the requirement that test scores be reported separately for several categories of students who often do poorly. Many welcomed this move, yet because the law is so underfunded—President George W. Bush is recommending appropriation levels more than $9.4 billion below the law's authorized amounts—the opportunity to give focused attention to low performers is becoming a pipe dream in many districts. Still, if just one subgroup falls short of the progress mark, educators must live with the demoralizing mark on their school as deficient—a "failure" in the mind of the public.

In addition, while the law aims to put quality teachers in every classroom, its definition of "highly qualified" leaves out thousands who are not only competent, but leaders of their profession.

And it puts new, often confusing demands on education support professionals aiming to fulfill their own puzzling "highly qualified" requirements. Many have expressed frustra-

tion over not having the time—or financial means—to legally continue the work they love. (See "Para Quality: Not So Simple Anymore," page 24).

The problems have not escaped lawmakers, who were once big boosters of the law. "Clearly, we have encountered some unintended consequences," wrote U.S. Rep. Rob Simmons, a Republican from Connecticut in a letter to Department of Education Secretary Rod Paige last year. "If we are not able to restructure the law...," he added, "we run the risk of losing [its] worthwhile goals."

A series of studies from the Harvard Civil Rights Project (www.civilrightsproject.harvard.edu/research/esea/nclb.php) came to the same conclusion and raised concerns about the law's ability to help those needing it most. The researchers found that:

**FEWER THAN 3** percent of students eligible for Title I-funded transfers from "low-performing" schools took advantage of them in the 10 districts studied, and those transferring usually went to schools not so different from the ones they left.

**SUPPLEMENTAL SERVICES** such as tutoring, mandated under the law, siphoned money from school improvement and required little accountability from organizations rendering those services.

**THE LAW'S SANCTIONS** are falling disproportionately on the very low-performing schools ESEA is supposed to help most.

"It's as if you were to take the temperature of everybody in a hospital waiting room, and then take away the medicine from those with the highest temperatures and threaten to hit them," said Project Co-director Gary Orfield. "That's supposed to be the cure: They will cure themselves if you punish them enough."

Orfield says the irony is huge. "We're dismantling desegregation, sending kids back to highly impoverished schools, and then we slap a big F on them," he notes. "All of a sudden, instead of the problems being blamed on discrimination and inequality, they're blamed on whoever happens to be in that school—both the staff and the kids."

It is no wonder that as the number of schools labeled "in need of improvement" swells to 30 percent of all American schools, many people inside and outside education are putting the law itself on the list. And they are asking: Are the claims the law promised to fulfill being met?

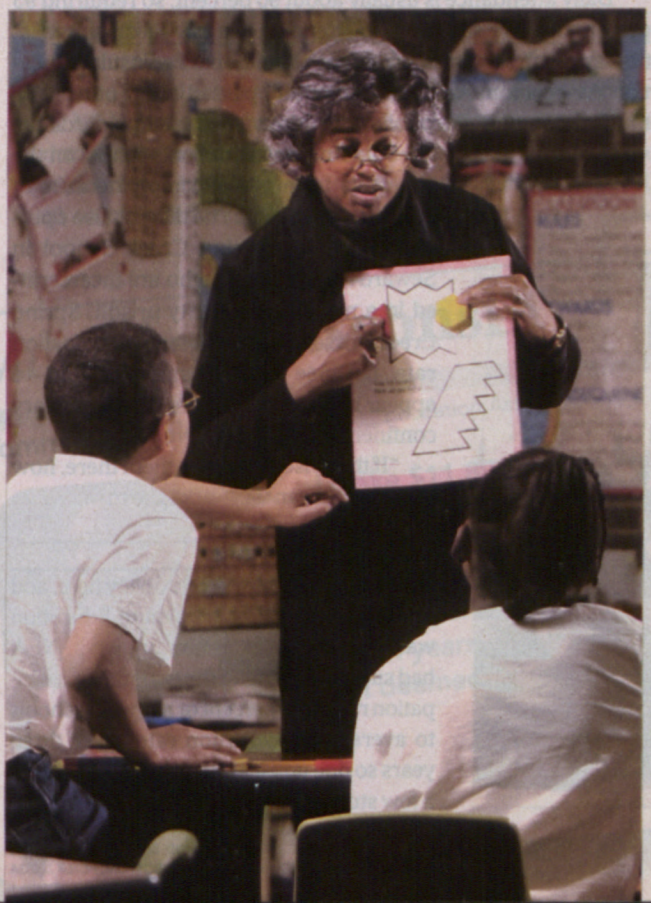
## Rochester, Minnesota

NAME: Lynette Lenoch-Craft

JOB: Eighth-grade Teacher

SUBJECT: Mathematics

**One of my math units has a mystery built about it, and I've always taken time for that. The children have to discover who this thief is—it's such a great thing, but we have to drop it. We can't do the things we have to do for testing and still keep those kinds of thought-provoking activities for students. Part of me thinks, quite honestly, that it's an attempt not to let children become thinkers, but just rote memorizers.**



### CLAIM

**Every student in America will be proficient in reading and math by 2014.**

#### DEFECT

The law stigmatizes and punishes any school that fails to make the annual goal—no matter the reason. It makes little allowance for schools battling disparities in achievement caused by such social ills as poverty, parental neglect, and crime. It's an all or nothing mandate.

#### ACCIDENT REPORT

At T.C. Berrien Elementary in Fayetteville, North Carolina, 90 percent of the students receive free lunch. The faculty has launched an all-out campaign to improve low scores. Community volunteers come in during the day to tutor. Teachers stay late two or three times a week to help individual students who are not doing well enough. "We have a demanding workload here, but if you want to make growth at your school, you have to go that step beyond the usual," says first-grade teacher Barbara Thompson,

**Barbara Thompson** and her colleagues got bonuses from North Carolina for boosting achievement, but the feds say these educators aren't "adequate."

PHOTO TOP: JANET HOFSTETTER; BOTTOM: DAVID SMITH

who stays late to tutor older children.

Those efforts paid off last year when scores rose, triggering $1,500 state bonuses for the staff. But a few days after the party they held to celebrate, the school had to send letters to parents reporting that T.C. Berrien was not up to federal standards. The school had not quite made the federal score cutoff. As a result, teachers are now taking so many professional development workshops, there's not enough time in the classroom to put it all together, says third-grade teacher Bridget Hancock. Just in February, Hancock was out of her room nearly 10 days for workshops. "It's killing some people's spirit," she says of the pressure. "Several people don't plan to stay. Teaching is all I've ever wanted to do since I was a child, but this is taking the love out of it."

## Denver, Colorado

NAME: Candace Epperson
JOB: Elementary Teacher
SUBJECT: Special Education

My special education students have to take the tests, which makes me the chief torturer. I had a student who was suicidal, so our team exempted him. And every day for two months, my principal said, "Don't you think he's feeling better today? Oh, I think he can take it." And I said, "No, he was self-mutilating in the cafeteria today, I don't think he's going to take the test." Literally every day. But I won. I would not let him take the test.

### RECALL ORDER

NEA has proposed 11 changes to the law and regulations that would allow schools to use multiple measures of student achievement. H.R. 3049, by Rep. Ted Strickland (D-OH), would grant schools credit for moving students up all parts of the achievement scale, and for improving achievement over time.

### CLAIM

**All students will be tested to make sure they reach proficiency.**

### DEFECT

This requirement has meant 95 percent test participation for all students and for each subgroup—low-income, disabled, English-language learners (ELL), and every racial or ethnic group. Thousands of schools missed the mark because of this rule.

### ACCIDENT REPORT

Soldotna High School on Alaska's rural Kenai Peninsula knows a single student can make all the difference. Had one more kid attended class on the day the school administered the state test, Soldotna would have made adequate yearly progress (AYP). Soldotna, which serves about 500 students, reached the 95 percent mark with students to spare for the student body as a whole. But only 49 of the school's 52 economically disadvantaged students took the test, a participation rate of 94 percent.

Daily attendance is usually about 90 percent, so requiring 95 percent of every subgroup to attend on test day seems unrealistic, says Cathy Carrow, president of the Kenai Peninsula Education Association. Although the school passed every other AYP hurdle, she notes, the public now thinks it has low standards.

Soldotna wasn't the only school on the peninsula to miss AYP simply because of low test attendance. The district also operates a school—Spring Creek School in Seward—for students who are incarcerated in a maximum security prison. Spring Creek missed the 95 percent participation rate because several students had to appear in court and others were in solitary confinement on test day.

"If the prison can't get them there, how in the world can we?" asks Carrow.

### RECALL ORDER

NEA has lobbied for flexibility here, and at press time the Department of Education was signaling its intention to give it. NEA had suggested cutting the minimum participation rate to 90 percent or allowing schools to average participation rates over three years so one unusual event involving one or a few students won't sink the whole school.

California special educator **Ellen Gervase** can get difficult students hooked on learning, but the feds say she's not "highly qualified."

LEFT PAGE: PHOTO TOP, DAVID ZALUBOWSKI; BOTTOM, BOB RIHA JR.
RIGHT PAGE: PHOTO TOP, SHAUN CLOUD; BOTTOM, PETER ZUZGA

## CLAIM

### The tough new law will give America a better-educated citizenry.

#### DEFECT

The threat of severe penalties for failing to meet extremely difficult reading and math test score targets makes schools concentrate on test prep and drop important subjects and activities that will not be on the test.

#### ACCIDENT REPORT

Last year, students at University Park Elementary School in Hyattsville, Maryland, tested higher than the state average, yet specialty subjects—art, instrumental music, and a gifted and talented program—were suspended this year for six weeks to prepare kids for the state test. A recent study by the Council for Basic Education revealed that this trend is nationwide, and a direct result of the federal law. (Visit www.c-b-e.org for more.)

"The teachers think the six-week suspension is going overboard," says sixth-grade teacher Jeff Favaro, "especially since the school is doing so well. Teachers feel discouraged, and the kids feel as if they're being punished."

When parents expressed concern about the canceled classes, they were told that if the school didn't make AYP, they might lose these programs entirely. Physical education teacher Yvonne Baicich has been helping students review math lessons at Kingsford Elementary School in Mitchellville, Maryland. But the drills, she says, are needless and the kids are "bored."

#### RECALL ORDER

Because schools should be able to prove their quality through a broad range of measures that tap the entire curriculum, NEA opposes measuring schools solely on two test scores, and solely on the percent of students who score at or above the proficient level. Legislation by Rep. Ted Strickland (D-OH), H.R. 3049, would provide much-needed flexibility in this area.

Music, art, and other subjects not tested under ESEA are being cut back, suspended, or eliminated altogether throughout the country.

## CLAIM

### Every student will be taught academic subjects by a teacher who is highly qualified in that subject.

#### DEFECT

This noble provision has run up against reality in a number of areas. One is with secondary school special educators who teach many subjects. The new law says they must have the equivalent of a college major in every major academic subject, or pass a content knowledge test, or meet another state standard.

#### ACCIDENT REPORT

Ellen Gervase teaches high school students in a self-contained, special education class at an alternative school in Pomona, California. "More than half of my students have probation officers, mostly for drug offenses," says Gervase. "I am not only their sole source of academics but their counselor and mentor. I got Mother's Day gifts from two students because I'm more of a parent to them than their biological moms."

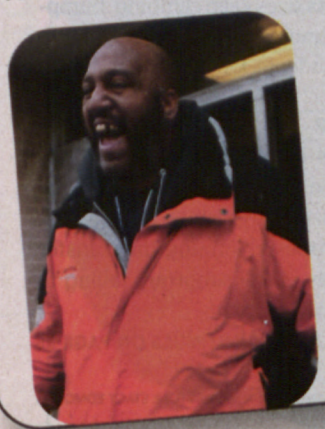
Gervase was Pomona's Teacher of the Year in 2001 and has mentored many other teachers in her 34-year career, but she's not "highly qualified" according to federal law. "I would need degrees in about seven different subjects," she explains.

In fact, she points out, none of the Pomona Alternative School faculty are "highly qualified" because they all teach self-contained, multi-subject classes.

## Milwaukee, Wisconsin

NAME
**Tommie Lee Glenn**

JOB
Education Assistant



**I make $11,800 a year. That's not conducive to going to a two-year university to hurry up and get in compliance. I've been competent according to the teachers and parents I work with for six or seven years, but now all of a sudden I am deemed unqualified.**

NAME: **THE FIX**

SUBJECT: REPAIR MANUAL FOR A BROKEN LAW

Gervase's degree and teaching certificate are in special education. She sharpens her skills in individual subjects by studying hard and often. "I take the teacher's edition of the textbooks home. One summer, I read four years' worth of English textbooks." And when she feels weak in a subject, such as geometry, she gets teaching assistance from a colleague who's stronger.

But her big challenges are not academic. She's helped a schizophrenic girl who saw things that weren't there and was victimized by other children. With meds and Gervase's TLC, that student graduated and is holding down a job. One boy missed a whole year of school while his mother hid from an abusive relationship—he'll graduate soon. "I find one hook to catch them and keep them here," Gervase says," and in spite of themselves, they're bound for success—most of the time."

### RECALL ORDER

NEA has proposed making special education a "core academic subject" like English or math. Bilingual, ELL, and some rural school teachers also teach several subjects. S. 1248, the bill reauthorizing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, contains a partial fix for special ed teachers, and NEA is working to improve it. NEA also supports S. 2164 and H.R. 3781, which would provide flexibility for rural teachers.

## CLAIM

**Students at schools that are not up to standard will have the opportunity to transfer to better schools.**

### DEFECT

Often, there's no good school within a reasonable distance to which a student can transfer. And if there is, the school may not have space. But the government insists transfers must be accepted anyway.

**Terri Jackson's** school in Tennessee was already bulging before they got word another 42 kids were on their way from a school that didn't make AYP.

### ACCIDENT REPORT

In her four years at Ooltewah Middle School (OMS) in southeastern Tennessee, counselor Terri Jackson has observed how mushrooming subdivisions on nearby land have fed increasing numbers of grade 6–8 students into her building. On top of that, this year Ooltewah has 42 new students from a Chattanooga Title I middle school 15 miles away that didn't make AYP. Jackson worries that the bulging school has been unable to offer the full support the kids need.

"There was no time for orientation," she laments. That would have helped, she says, as would the federal aid these transferred students enjoyed in their old school. OMS isn't a Title I facility and doesn't have the same access to federal funding for class size reduction, textbook and software purchases, literacy aid, or after-school programs. So Ooltewah staffers have devised "academic support modules" for the Chattanooga students, and even located free tutoring.

But challenges just keep emerging: Transferred students, many from families without cars, must make the one-and-only afternoon bus home. That impacts extracurricular activities, in-school tutoring, and even discipline—forcing staffers to find other consequences for infractions besides after-school discipline or bus-riding suspensions. And Ooltewah's class sizes keep climbing, bumping up against maximums set by Tennessee state law. Built for 750 students, OMS now has 1,080.

### RECALL ORDER

NEA supports H.R. 947 that would allow school districts to prohibit transfers if they increase class size above state maximums. NEA has also proposed limiting the transfer option to students in the subgroup failing to meet AYP standards.

CONTINUES ON PAGE 35

## Cheltenham, Pennsylvania

NAME: **Richard Bioteau**

JOB: High School Teacher

SUBJECT: Chemistry

**No Child Left Behind scares the living daylights out of me. As a student, I did not in any way, shape, or form score well on standardized tests. But because a couple of teachers wouldn't leave me behind, I got to major in chemistry, and then I got a master's. The fact that I did not score well on tests did not hold me back. But put a kid like me in our school district right now and he'll never achieve.**



PHOTO TOP: DAVID HUMBER; BOTTOM: STACY EDMONDS

*The so-called* No Child Left Behind law:

# ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL AMERICA'S CHILDREN

**Parents and communities are counting on NEA members.**

**TOGETHER WE CAN FIX THIS LAW.**

Poster Inside!

nea
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nea.org
Great Public Schools for Every Child

# *The so-called* No Child Left Behind law:

# ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL AMERICA'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**NEA HAS BEEN AT THE FOREFRONT ON ACHIEVING THE GOALS OF "NCLB":** improving student achievement, closing the achievement gap, and improving teacher quality. But, this law needs significant changes to ensure that it meets those goals instead of undermining them.

## A One-Size-Fits-All Approach

**1** The law demands that all children learn at the same rate, in the same *way, largely without regard to* individual differences and needs. It removes discretion for teachers and parents in determining what works best in the classroom. It is narrowing the curriculum in classrooms throughout the country. **NEA BELIEVES** every child should be treated as unique and deserving of individualized instruction.

## Undermines Teacher Quality

**2** The law discourages experienced teachers from staying in the classroom while promoting alternative teaching programs that don't require adequate training about how students learn. It makes it harder for schools in rural areas to respond to teacher shortages. **NEA SUPPORTS** qualified teachers for every classroom through real professional development, mentoring programs for new teachers, thorough evaluation, and incentives for teachers to work in schools that face the greatest challenges.

## High-Stakes Standardized Tests

**3** The law requires schools to focus on two high-stakes, standardized tests—rather than measuring individual student progress through homework, class participation, projects, and testing over time. And if just a few children don't do well on these two tests—or even if a few children don't show up to take the test—the whole school can be labeled "failing." Schools are even limited in how they can use test scores, preventing them from measuring student growth over time and instead basing everything on how students do on one single day. **NEA SUPPORTS** standardized tests as one of a range of effective tools for assessing each student's learning progress.

## Fails Good Schools and Punishes Struggling Ones

**4** The law labels schools as "failing" if just a few students do not do well on a high-stakes, standardized test. Already, more than 27,000 schools, including many of the nation's top "blue ribbon" schools, have been tarred with labels under the new federal rules. Schools that face the greatest challenges will have their funding cut and their staff punished even if they are making significant progress. **NEA BELIEVES** teachers and students should be held to high expectations and the achievement gap must be closed, but every school must have the resources—such as small class sizes and up-to-date books and materials—to help each student succeed.

## More Bureaucrats, More Bureaucracy

**5** Under the law, bureaucrats at the federal and state level set rules, tote up high-stakes test scores, and dictate penalties for schools that don't meet federal quotas. And the law requires states, districts, and schools to waste limited resources on more tests, paperwork, and bureaucracy. **NEA BELIEVES** that the people closest to the schools—teachers, principals, and parents—should have the flexibility to teach as children learn best.

## Small Steps with Special Needs Students

**6** Only recently, under pressure from NEA members and parents across the country, have policy makers provided limited flexibility under the law for students with disabilities and English-language learners. Failure to take this common-sense step sooner meant "failing" labels for thousands of schools. **NEA BELIEVES** any school that failed now-outdated standards should have the right to be reevaluated to ensure no school is inaccurately labeled.

## Unfunded Mandates

**7** NCLB sets the wrong priorities, requiring states and school districts to spend more for paperwork and bureaucracy—even as states are cutting resources for things we know work: smaller class sizes, qualified teachers and education support professionals, and up-to-date books and materials. The President's new budget falls $9.4 billion short of the amount promised in the law. The mandates are a lose-lose proposition. Troubled schools are left behind and more successful schools become overcrowded. **NEA BELIEVES** the federal government should be a partner in helping states meet the needs of each individual student, not divert critical resources away from teaching and learning.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP PARENTS AND COMMUNITIES UNDERSTAND AND FIX THIS BROKEN LAW

**Now that you know what's wrong with the law, speak up, speak out, and get involved.**

Here are some things teachers, support professionals, parents, and communities can do to fix the law:

—**LEARN MORE** about the National Education Association's plan to fix NCLB, and give a great public school to every child at www.nea.org/greatschools.

—**SPEAK OUT** in the community—at PTA meetings, in letters to the editor, and in conversations at work and in your neighborhood. Tell people how NCLB is hurting schools and students.

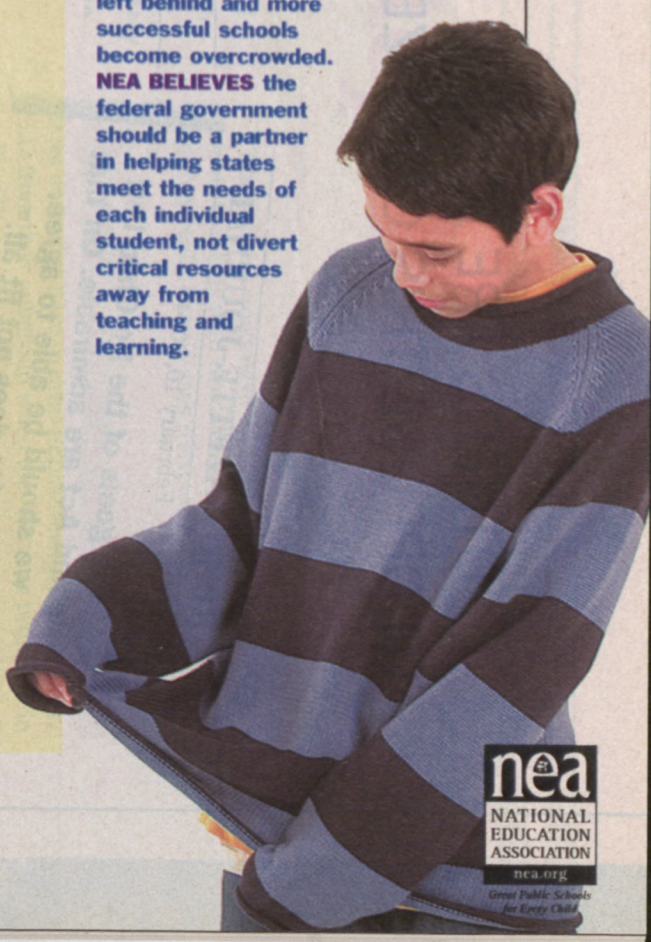
—**URGE MEMBERS** of Congress to cosponsor bills to fix the problems in this law, and to provide additional investments in important programs, including Title I, Teacher Quality, and after-school. You can e-mail your member of Congress at www.nea.org/greatschools.

—**URGE YOUR** state legislators to express their concerns to Congress. Several states have already passed resolutions calling for fixes and adequate funding.

—**TALK TO** your school principal, district superintendent, and school board members. NEA is working closely with national groups representing administrators and school board members to fix this law.

—**DEMAND THAT** education be a legislative priority and hold politicians accountable for the votes they cast on public education.

—**REGISTER TO** vote and register others.



**www.nea.org/greatschools**

nea NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION nea.org Great Public Schools for Every Child

# OTHERS ARE JOINING WITH NEA TO OPPOSE THIS ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL LAW

**RENO GAZETTE-JOURNAL**

February 10, 2004

**"The goals of the No Child Left Behind Act are admirable. On that we should be able to agree. But one size does not fit all."**

**WASHINGTON POST**

January 24, 2004

**"Virginia Seeks to Leave Bush Law Behind"**

**MINNESOTA PUBLIC RADIO**

February 16, 2004

**"Revolt is brewing over No Child Left Behind."**

**DETROIT NEWS**

March 1, 2004

**"Five States Want Out of Education Law; Critics: School Law Hurts Kids"**

**LOS ANGELES TIMES**

January 6, 2004

**"Bush's Education Reform Gets Poor Marks All Around; Conservatives and liberals, and even some school officials, say the plan is too bureaucratic and needs better funding."**

**"NEA members and parents across the country have worked hard to get this law fixed. We've had some success. But there's more work to be done. Unless further changes are made, the unfair and inaccurate labeling of schools and students will continue and single test scores will decide the futures of thousands of children. The movement to fix this law has become a groundswell. Learn what you can do to make your voice heard in Washington, DC. Visit nea.org/greatschools."**

*—Reg Weaver*
NEA PRESIDENT

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nea.org
*Great Public Schools for Every Child*

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 30

# ESEA Repair Log

**After more than a year of proposals, petitions, and pounding on the door by NEA, other organizations, and state legislators, the Department of Education recently took several steps that make the Elementary and Secondary Education Act more workable—for some students with disabilities, middle school teachers, and English-language learners. At press time it announced its intentions to offer more flexibility on still other rules—those involving attendance requirements and rural teachers. It's all a start, but much more needs to be done to fix and fund the law so that its focus will no longer be on measuring and imposing sanctions based just on two test scores. The successes so far:**

## ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Up to one percent of students can now be evaluated according to "alternative standards." That means students with significant cognitive disabilities who cannot compete with most of their age-mates in reading and math can be assessed according to standards designed for them. This will affect roughly 1 out of 11 special education students, says NEA staffer Patti Ralabate, who was in the thick of the massive lobbying campaign that brought about this change. She says the new rule will help although it's not enough.

Other special education students must still meet the state's academic standards for their grade level, but they may qualify for accommodations in the way they are assessed.

"Many states don't have the variety of ways to assess students that kids with disabilities need in order to show what they really know," says Ralabate. "That's our next push."

## COUNTING ENGLISH-LANGUAGE LEARNERS

States no longer have to drop English-Language learners (ELL) from their subgroup when they become proficient in English. These students' scores can count toward AYP for two years after they achieve proficiency. Previously, these students triggered a catch-22 provision in the regulations: Once they became proficient, they were eliminated from the group, so the group could never meet yearly proficiency targets. In addition, states can now exempt immigrant students in the United States for less than a year from the reading test, though they still must take the math test.

## HIGHLY QUALIFIED MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHERS

States can designate middle school grades or specific subjects as elementary level for the purposes of the highly qualified teacher provision of the law. That way, a middle school teacher explaining the fine points of fractions and decimals won't have to pass a test designed for high school calculus teachers.

## HIGHLY QUALIFIED HIGH SCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

Special education teachers who co-teach with academic subject teachers or who provide consultation to them need not have degrees in each subject area. That will help many teachers, but not those who work in self-contained special education classes.

## TAKE ACTION! Make your voice heard to improve ESEA

NEA has proposed a comprehensive set of changes to fix the new law, and many of these have been filed as bills in Congress. The NEA Web site makes it easy to e-mail your senators and representatives in support of these proposals—and to find out important details about the law and what particular provisions mean to you.

Go to www.nea.org/lac/esea/. Congress is beginning to listen to the voices of America's frontline educators, but we need to keep the pressure on!

The NEA Government Relations Department (GR) also suggests that members participate in "town meetings" held by congressional representatives and senators in their states and districts to express your views.

Invite legislators to your schools. Engage parents in discussions about the law. And, says GR staffer Norma Kacen, don't forget to say "thank you" when a member of Congress takes action in support of your position.

NAME: **THE FIX**

SUBJECT: REPAIR MANUAL FOR A BROKEN LAW

# Mad Cows

## When No Child Left Behind is applied to farming, the results are udder-ly preposterous.

THE PROPONENTS OF NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND draw the unmistakable conclusion that testing students is the way to bring about improvements in student performance.

Since testing is the key to improving performance, I don't see why this principle shouldn't be applied to other businesses that are not performing up to expectations. In Vermont, we've been troubled by the problem of falling milk prices, and I was just thinking: Wouldn't testing cows be an effective way to increase milk production, since testing students is going to bring up test scores?

The federal government should mandate testing all cows every year starting at age 2. Now I know that it will take time out of the farmers' necessary work to do this testing every year—and that it may be necessary to spend inordinate amounts of money on the testing equipment—but that should not distract us from what must be done.

I'm sure there are plenty of statistics to show what good milk producing performance looks like, and volumes written on the characteristics of cows who achieve this level of performance. So we'll begin our testing by finding out which cows now meet the standard, which almost meet the standard, which meet the standard with honors, and which show little evidence of achievement. Points will be assigned in each category and it will be necessary to achieve a defined average score. If this score is not achieved, the Department of Agriculture will send in experts to give advice for improvement. If improvements do not occur over a couple of years, the state will take over the farm or even force its sale.

> If cows are not meeting the standard in certain farms, they will be allowed to go to the barn of their choice.

Now I'm sure farms have a mix of cows in the barn, but it is important to remember that every cow can meet the standard. There should be no exceptions and no excuses. I don't want to hear about the cows that just came to the barn from the farm down the road that didn't provide the proper nutrition or a proper living environment. All cows need to meet the standard.

Another key factor will be the placement of a highly qualified farmer in each barn. I know many folks have been farming for many years, but all farmers will need to be certified. This will mean some more paperwork, and farmers will need to be tested on their knowledge of cows, but in the end everyone will benefit.

It will also be necessary to allow barn choice for the cows. If cows are not meeting the standard in certain farms, they will be allowed to go to the barn of their choice. Transportation may become an issue, but it is critical that cows be allowed to leave their low-performing barns. This will force low-performing farms to meet the standard or simply go out of business.

Some farmers may be upset that I claim to know what is best for cows, but I certainly consider myself capable of making these recommendations. After all, I grew up next to a farm and I drink milk. I hope you will consider this advice in the spirit it is given, and I hope you will agree that the NO COW LEFT BEHIND law will be just as successful in dairy farming as No Child Left Behind promises to be when applied to our schools.

—Kenneth Remsen is principal of Underhill I.D. School in Jericho, Vermont. A version of this article originally appeared in the *Burlington Free Press*.

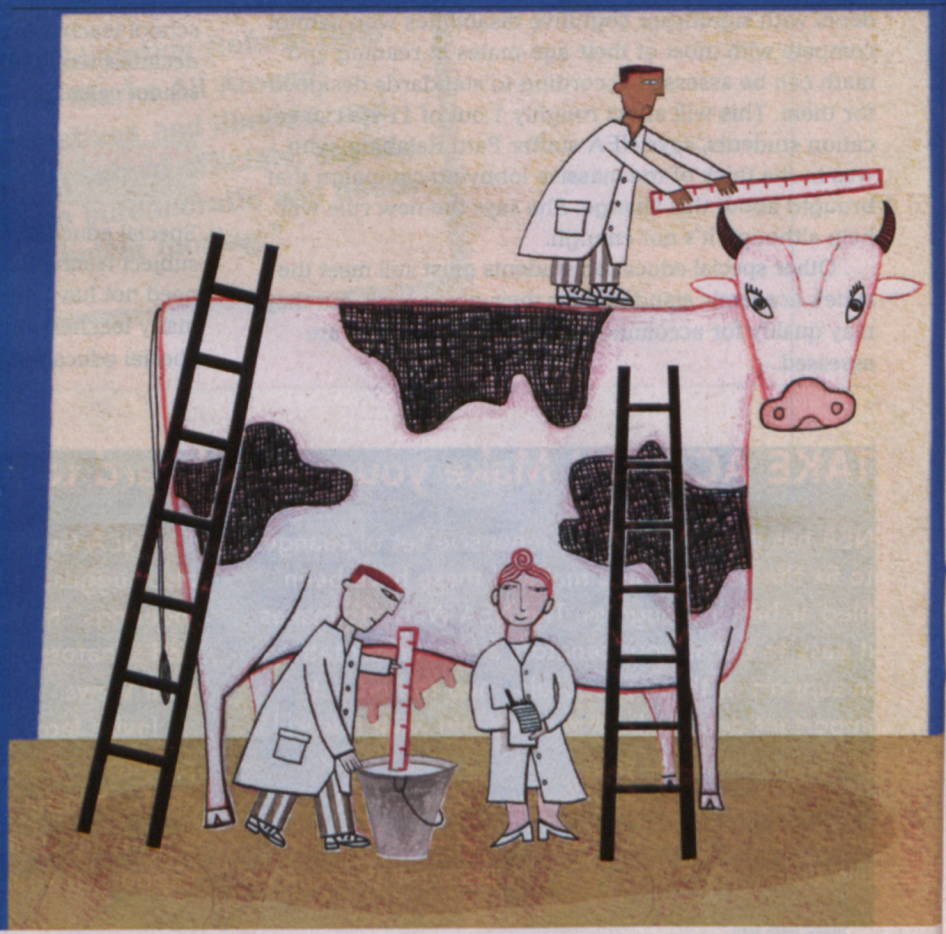


ILLUSTRATION: PAULA McARDLE

# Special Legislator

## This state official with a national role has a classroom view of ESEA.

**NEA PRESIDENT REG WEAVER** often speaks about politicians who "couldn't last half an hour in your classroom," but he readily agrees that here's one who could—and does. He is Kory Holdaway, a Republican state representative in Utah who chairs the National Conference of State Legislatures' education committee. He's also an NEA member who teaches severely disabled students at Taylorsville High School near Salt Lake City. He spoke with *NEA Today*'s Alain Jehlen about the revised Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

PHOTO: STEVE WILSON

**How does classroom experience affect your view of ESEA?**

**HOLDAWAY:** It's a huge effect. No Child Left Behind requires that 100 percent meet the proficiency level. But many of my students, as wonderful as they are, physically don't have that ability. So we're castigating them and saying, you are the reason our school didn't make adequate yearly progress.

**Was your school among those that did not make AYP?**

**HOLDAWAY:** Yes. One-third of Utah schools did not meet AYP and we were one of them. Our special needs group was one group that did not. It breaks your heart. They're expected to pass the test, and they go away feeling so badly about their inability to do it. And by 2014, unless things change, we're going to have 100 percent of schools on that needs improvement list. One hundred percent proficient is just not a reasonable goal. But I don't want to say we should leave students behind. I'm just saying, let's work at a level that's reasonable for each individual child.

**The new regulations allow 1 percent of students not to meet the grade level standards. Is that not enough?**

**HOLDAWAY:** It's too low. Many more than 1 percent of students are going to demonstrate an inability to reach grade level.

**Is there a conflict here between ESEA and IDEA, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act?**

**HOLDAWAY:** Under IDEA, you must not discriminate against individuals with disabilities. But No Child Left Behind says all students must be at grade level by 2014. Those requirements compete: You'll measure students at grade level, but by definition, they are not at grade level. Otherwise, they wouldn't be in special education. The federal government lets states set the threshold for proficiency. But to set it at a level all students could pass, we would have to set it at second or third grade.

**What do you think might happen to these kids?**

**HOLDAWAY:** I don't know, but it frightens me. There may be an attempt, in some schools, to close access for students with disabilities.

**How can this be fixed?**

**HOLDAWAY:** We need more latitude in the requirement to meet proficiency. They need to look at that seriously in the reauthorization of IDEA.

**How can we have rigorous academic standards and yet not put kids in a position where they can't succeed?**

**HOLDAWAY:** IDEA is the perfect example. You set goals based on an individual child's abilities. You meet in a team that includes a parent, an administrator, a teacher, and whoever else is needed. And everybody signs off and says, this is what we think Billy can achieve in the next year.

**What about other subgroups with larger numbers? Under IDEA, there's a team meeting to set goals for each student. But for limited English or low-income kids, what's the solution?**

**HOLDAWAY:** It would probably be a similar solution. The strength of the law is that disaggregating the data draws attention to those groups. Shining a light on the problem certainly helps. But I have yet to hear anyone admit that there's going to be a cost to bringing these students up. How can we not expect that it's going to cost a lot of money?

**You are affected by another controversial part of this law, the "highly qualified" teacher provision. What's the problem there?**

**HOLDAWAY:** Well, I teach history. I teach math. I teach science. I teach English. And I certainly don't have a bachelor's degree in each of those areas. So, strictly, I would not meet the "highly qualified" definition. And there's the same problem with rural teachers teaching multiple subjects.

**What should be done about that?**

**HOLDAWAY:** Let the individual states define "highly qualified" teacher.

**What do you hear about ESEA from other legislators you work with in the National Conference of State Legislatures?**

**HOLDAWAY:** There's a lot of frustration with what we see as a federal directive on a state responsibility.

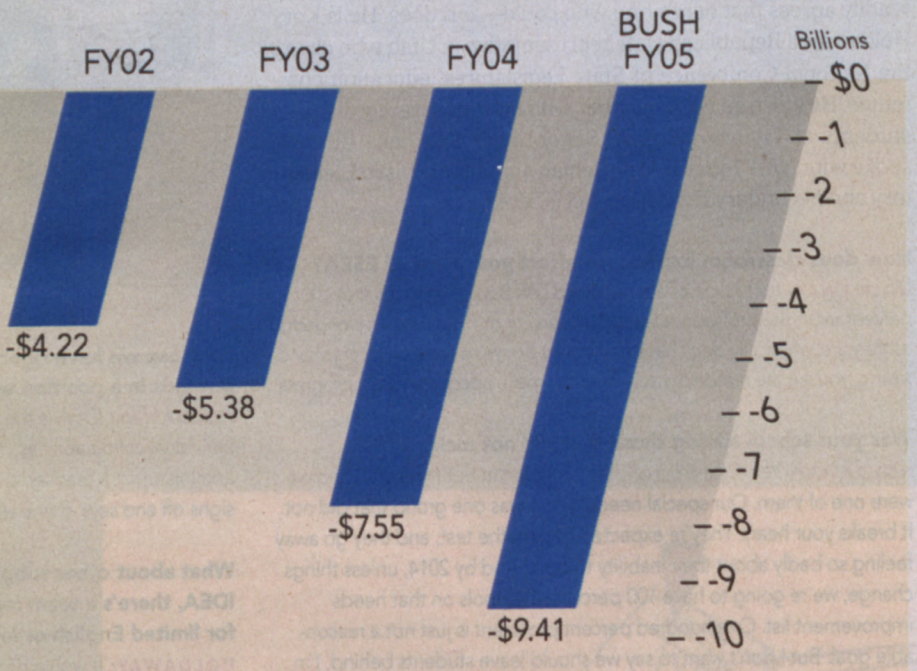
Nowhere does the federal Constitution talk about education. But the Utah constitution says that we will provide a free, appropriate, public education for every child. We have that obligation, whereas the federal government does not. And yet, they continue to dictate to states what their education system should look like.

# More $? Hold Your Breath

**"Fix and fund"—it's been the chant of NEA and its supporters since the revised Elementary and Secondary Education Act became law. To date, though, the message has fallen on deaf ears. Congress's appropriation for implementation of ESEA has never reached anywhere near the amounts called for in the law itself. But they have beat out the funding levels requested by President George W. Bush every time—by a total of $6.6 billion over the last three years. Why does the president insist on squeezing states already strapped by mounting budget crises? It's hard to know for sure, but the reality play is making a repeat performance in the current battle over the proposed 2005 education budget. Bush is requesting *$9.4 billion less* than the law demands. Back to the drawing board.**

## How a hole became a chasm

These figures show the growing gap between the funds ESEA promises and actual dollars appropriated (or, for 2005, the Bush budget request).




SOURCE: NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION, FEBRUARY 2, 2004

## Missing Moola

States tell feds to put their money where their mouth is—or take their law and go play.

**HOW MUCH WILL IT COST** to carry out the law called "No Child Left Behind"?

Enormous sums, say state legislators and education officials.

No more than we're already giving you, say U.S. Department of Education officials.

And the debate grows more heated as the new law's sanctions take hold amid rapidly growing lists of schools deemed "in need of improvement."

The law requires that schools make all children "proficient" in reading and math by 2014. "We have no way of knowing how much that would cost because nobody has ever done it," says NEA Student Achievement Director Stephanie Fanjul.

"Any serious effort even to get close to the goal would have to include money for smaller class size, teacher mentoring, paid time for teachers to plan together, programs to help parents do their part—a whole array of programs that can help children learn. Realistically, even that would be unlikely to make every child proficient, but it would certainly move us in that direction."

Probably the most extensive cost study so far was carried out for the Ohio Department of Education. The Ohio researchers estimated that the costs would grow rapidly, reaching nearly $1.5 billion a year in 2010. Of that, they said, federal funding covers only $44 million. To make up the shortfall, state and local governments would have to boost their own school spending by 11 percent.

What's the money for? Seven percent would go for the testing and for meeting the highly qualified teacher and paraprofessional requirements of the law. The remaining 93 percent is for summer school, extended school days, and other efforts to boost student achievement. Ohio's own standards call for 75 percent of students to perform successfully. Going from 75 percent to the federal 100 percent, the study notes, will cost plenty.

But is $1.5 billion a year realistic? Ohio released comments on its study from 10 experts. Some said it was on target. Some said

CHART ILLUSTRATION: GREG HARGREAVES

# Shrunken Commitment

ESEA says states should get much more Title I funding in 2005 (column I) than the Bush budget calls for (column II). That means low-income children are short-changed many hundreds of dollars each (column III) in spending for their education.

| State | 2005 Title 1 Authorization | 2005 Title 1 Budget Request | Title 1 Shortfall Per Low-income Child |
|---|---|---|---|
| Alabama | $303,386,608 | $197,289,856 | $628 |
| Alaska | 54,176,642 | 35,230,632 | $1,219 |
| Arizona | 381,009,137 | 247,767,158 | $745 |
| Arkansas | 188,078,582 | 122,305,980 | $646 |
| California | 2,996,791,026 | 1,948,788,950 | $827 |
| Colorado | 187,047,116 | 121,635,226 | $773 |
| Connecticut | 168,759,558 | 109,742,975 | $963 |
| Delaware | 54,307,067 | 35,315,446 | $1,179 |
| District of Columbia | 85,550,125 | 55,632,554 | $1,199 |
| Florida | 981,619,916 | 638,339,487 | $755 |
| Georgia | 629,472,155 | 409,340,648 | $851 |
| Hawaii | 73,237,173 | 47,625,541 | $884 |
| Idaho | 68,915,179 | 44,814,983 | $682 |
| Illinois | 897,734,970 | 583,789,785 | $973 |
| Indiana | 264,193,287 | 171,802,756 | $732 |
| Iowa | 99,027,806 | 64,396,981 | $635 |
| Kansas | 128,551,724 | 83,596,146 | $795 |
| Kentucky | 270,657,667 | 176,006,490 | $661 |
| Louisiana | 444,216,633 | 288,870,481 | $678 |
| Maine | 72,774,256 | 47,324,510 | $879 |
| Maryland | 278,794,025 | 181,297,498 | $960 |
| Massachusetts | 354,472,512 | 230,510,606 | $961 |
| Michigan | 662,714,622 | 430,957,955 | $926 |
| Minnesota | 158,267,733 | 102,920,226 | $634 |
| Mississippi | 258,174,191 | 167,888,587 | $606 |
| Missouri | 296,341,292 | 192,708,344 | $665 |
| Montana | 66,947,118 | 43,535,169 | $762 |
| Nebraska | 78,351,627 | 50,951,429 | $711 |
| Nevada | 111,542,595 | 72,535,247 | $835 |
| New Hampshire | 48,774,258 | 31,717,505 | $1,013 |
| New Jersey | 415,003,000 | 269,873,092 | $881 |
| New Mexico | 189,856,399 | 123,462,080 | $738 |
| New York | 2,145,738,564 | 1,395,356,422 | $1,133 |
| North Carolina | 446,723,651 | 290,500,775 | $722 |
| North Dakota | 50,541,366 | 32,866,641 | $1,149 |
| Ohio | 641,065,401 | 416,879,642 | $799 |
| Oklahoma | 227,413,224 | 147,884,979 | $670 |
| Oregon | 209,245,252 | 136,070,494 | $875 |
| Pennsylvania | 696,328,868 | 452,817,027 | $797 |
| Rhode Island | 75,178,717 | 48,888,111 | $902 |
| South Carolina | 266,522,720 | 173,317,568 | $691 |
| South Dakota | 58,547,447 | 38,072,931 | $862 |
| Tennessee | 327,419,935 | 212,918,534 | $665 |
| Texas | 1,858,808,336 | 1,208,768,017 | $779 |
| Utah | 81,336,477 | 52,892,453 | $597 |
| Vermont | 46,640,630 | 30,330,024 | $1,346 |
| Virginia | 317,229,286 | 206,291,637 | $741 |
| Washington | 275,764,544 | 179,327,451 | $681 |
| West Virginia | 150,738,678 | 98,024,142 | $763 |
| Wisconsin | 257,657,059 | 167,552,300 | $847 |
| Wyoming | 49,583,823 | 32,243,959 | $1,358 |

the estimate was too low or too high. And some said it's impossible to tell.

What's easy to tell is that the federal money comes nowhere near the promises made when the law passed. The law authorizes large increases in federal dollars. But those funds have not turned up in the federal budgets passed since then. And the gap between promise and reality keeps growing. (See "How a hole became a chasm," page 38.)

The latest White House budget projections actually call for education spending to drop in 2006 and 2007.

The enormous budget shortfalls have led many state legislators to demand that Washington either pay up or stop telling states what to do. So far, one or both houses in more than a dozen state legislatures—both conservative and liberal—have called for full funding, major changes, or outright repeal of the law.

The Republican-majority Virginia House of Delegates voted 98 to 1 to ask Congress to exempt their state from the mandates, which they called "one of the most sweeping intrusions into state and local control of education in the history of the United States." They said the law would cost "millions of dollars that Virginia does not have."

Federal officials are criss-crossing the country trying to put out fires in one state after another. They made three visits to Utah when that rock-ribbed Republican state's legislature moved toward passing a resolution calling for Utah to use its federal aid to carry out the law but no state money.

"There's some disparity about whether it's fully funded, so as we implement the law, we'll find out," said Utah House Speaker Martin Stephens. "If it is fully funded, then we'll implement it. If there are requirements for which there are not enough federal funds, then we won't."

Although the Utah house passed the bill, the state senate put it in a study. But within days, new rebellions erupted in Indiana and Pennsylvania.

—ALAIN JEHLEN

WITH ADDITIONAL REPORTING BY SABRINA HOLCOMB, KRISTEN LOSCHERT, JOHN O'NEIL, AND DAVE WINANS

# We're Baaack!

## What results when a teacher follows her students up the elementary school ladder from first to fifth grade? You guessed it: A classroom that functions as a family—minus the sibling rivalries.

BY JOHN O'NEIL

*"Sometimes, when you first go into a class, you get a really nervous feeling because you don't know anyone and you really don't know what to do."*

That's Dillon, a fifth grader at Bailey's Elementary in Falls Church, Virginia, explaining those rough first weeks every fall, when anxious kids bearing the latest backpack fashions try to figure out their place in a new classroom with a teacher who knows very little about them.

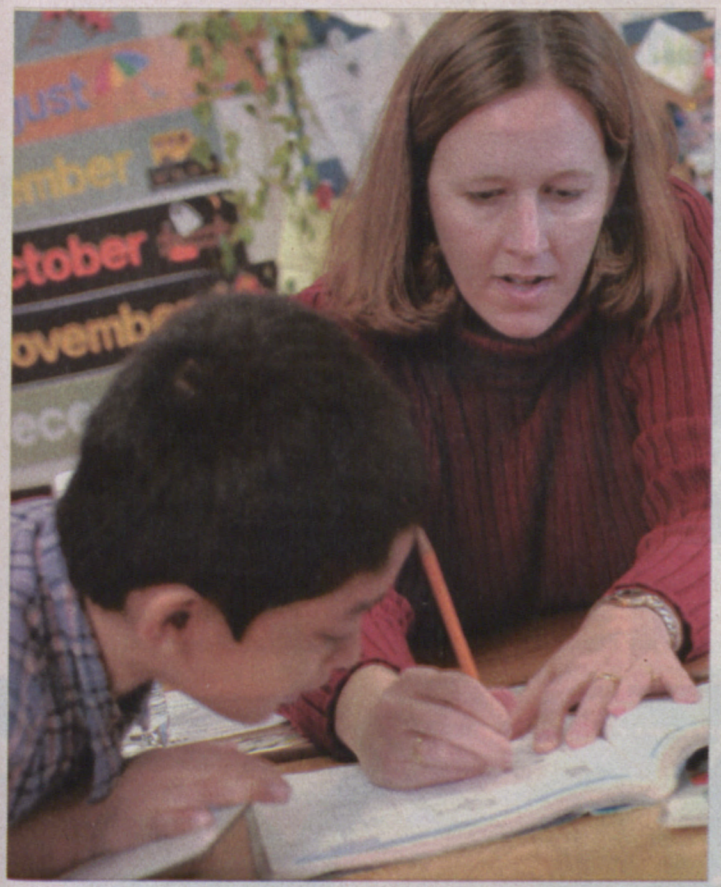
But Dillon and most of his peers in Melissa Fleischer's fifth-grade class at Bailey's haven't endured that rocky transition for a while now. That's because Fleischer has been "looping" with her students since the first grade. In 1999, she started with a group of 17 first graders. Eleven students from that original group are now included among the 22 students in her current class. Many of the others joined the experiment in the second or third grade. Only two students joined the group this fall and one of them, Catryna, fit in so quickly that the class voted her Student Council rep.

Across the country, looping is used in a relatively small number of schools, mostly at the primary level. Fleischer's approach—sticking with a class for five consecutive years—is almost unheard of. Currently, only one other grade-level teacher at Bailey's is looping with her class, moving together from first to second grade this year.

But, though it's rare, looping is paying big dividends in Fleischer's diverse classroom, where many of the students speak English as a second language, some are labeled as gifted, and



PHOTOS: SCOTT SUCHMAN



Left: **Melissa Fleischer's** close-knit fifth-grade class. Above: "One of the biggest benefits of looping is the community it helps establish," says Fleischer.

others have been diagnosed with learning disabilities.

"When you go into Melissa's class, you get the sense that the students and the teacher share a very deep understanding of each other's personalities and strengths and weaknesses," says Kristen Neshati, whose daughter, Niku, started with Fleischer in the first grade. "Niku is the kind of student who would not have come into her own as easily and confidently as she has with one teacher who's been committed to her over the years."

"One of the biggest benefits of looping is the community it helps establish," explains Fleischer. "We're like a family. It's an environment where kids can take a leap—they'll try for an answer or share a piece they've written aloud. They're much more likely to do that than if they just had a year together."

Not only does the class have fewer discipline problems, kids are quick to help one another out. "Listen to the way they talk to one another," says Fleischer. "They ask questions of each other; they give 'wait time.' If a kid says, 'I don't understand this,' and I can't be over there in 30 seconds, another kid will explain it."

Their self-assurance and teamwork showed during a writing lesson just before Valentine's Day. With everyone out of their chairs and sitting on the carpet, Fleischer led a discussion on good lead sentences, giving examples from *Charlotte's Web, The True Story of the Three Little Pigs,* and other books the class had read.

After some time to draft their pieces, the students, one after another, fearlessly mounted a stool at the front of the class and began reading from their works-in-progress.

"I stared out over the open landscape long after they had gone," one student offered. "Hurry, put on your gloves!" read another. "Pop-ups [ads] are an ongoing, money-sucking, time-waster, and they should be against the law," said a third.

The presentations were devoid of the putdowns you might typically hear, and many of the listeners offered thoughtful and polite comments in return. "All these [lead sentences] make you want to find out more," one student noted insightfully midway through the presentations. "I've been inspired," added another. The kids were so into it that Fleischer had to rein the conversation in after 20 minutes to give more time to complete the drafts.

"They take risks," Fleischer says later. "Ever since the first grade I've been putting their writing up on the overhead projector and teaching through their examples." At first, the kids just reacted to misspellings and poor grammar. Now they all understand that "if your piece is up there, we're going to tell you the great things about it and also help you improve it....The single biggest benefit of looping is the trust: the kids trust each other, and they trust me."

But that's hardly the only thing. Fleischer's multi-year experiment has actually helped her teaching by providing:

**A FAST START.** Most teachers spend lots of time each fall introducing students to classroom rules and procedures—and to one another. Fleischer's kids hit the ground running. "If we've saved a month or two each year—and we've been at this five years—you figure we're a good clip ahead of where the kids might have been at this time," she says.

**ENHANCED KNOWLEDGE OF EACH CHILD'S LEARNING.** Kids have different learning styles and they tend to learn in bursts, going a year or more between "breakthroughs." That's a challenge to teachers who spend September learning students' names and finish with them just nine months later. Fleischer says she's better able to troubleshoot students' learning problems and build on their strengths because she knows them so well.

**BETTER LINKS WITH PARENTS.** The parents of Fleischer's students—who voluntarily participate in the looping experiment—are frequent visitors to the classroom. The class holds "Family Fridays" once a month, and Fleischer encourages parents to drop by, which they do regularly, to discuss their child or a problem at home or work.

The looping arrangement does not come without its challenges, however. Fleischer has had to learn a new language arts, science, math, and social studies curriculum each year. But she says her grade-level team of teachers has helped her through.

Experts on looping say making the program optional—for parents and teachers—helps cut down on other problems, such as situations where a student gets bored or has a poor relationship with the teacher or with other kids. The arrangement at Bailey's is strictly voluntary, for example.

This June, Fleischer will send her charges on to middle school (Bailey's is a K–5 site). It'll be a big adjustment for them, so she says she's already begun talking about what they've learned together, and how they're equipped for the challenges of middle school and a new set of teachers. For her part, Fleischer says the end of her looping experiment "is going to be bittersweet. There's a piece of me that wishes we could go to sixth grade and have another round." nea

**FOR MORE,** check out our resources on looping from the Association for Curriculum and Supervision Development (www.ascd.org) or Staff Development for Educators (http://socdeved.com).

# Every child deserves a great public school. For student and staff health information, visit www.neahin.org

For information on these and other health topics, go to:

**www.neahin.org**

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National Education Association
Health Information Network
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School and Community Safety

Indoor Air Quality and Asthma

Parent-Child Communication

Physical Activity and Nutrition

Cancer Information

Substance Abuse

Children's Health Insurance

Sexual and Reproductive Health

Mental Wellness

# Have science fair projects grown out of control?

## YES

Initially, science fair projects were community proclamations of students' hard work in using the scientific method to investigate an idea.

Now, they are mostly cooperative ventures in which mentored students focus on small, in-depth projects, that most individuals cannot fully comprehend, sometimes in the hope of securing scholarship money.

Whatever happened to the broad picture of science as a way to ponder, to discover, and to investigate a problem?

Perhaps we need two separate fairs—mentored and nonmentored.

Science fair projects need to turn all students on to science, not turn most students off.

**ED ROHDE** High school science chair, Ellicott City, Maryland

The other day, I was in a large crafts store in my neighborhood, well-stocked with all kinds of things to help one be creative. I noticed two whole display boards labeled "Science Projects" containing many items that one would need to complete a project.

To me, this seems to take all the fun out of it. Sort of like downloading a paper from the Internet.

**BARBARA JOAN GRUBMAN** Retired speech specialist, Los Angeles, California

Science fair projects seem to be mostly competition among parents, not students. Most projects are done at home where they cannot be monitored.

Science teachers should decide on a reasonable amount of time it should take to do the project and then coordinate with the students' other teachers to allow students to do them in class.

For example, research and writing can be done in library and English classes.

Also, the projects should have something to do with the curriculum.

Projects shouldn't be graded on the basis of which one looks best, but rather on how much thought was put into it, how much research, and what the student did to complete the project.

**KAREN BROWER** Special education teacher, Brick, New Jersey

## NO

Days before I began teaching high school science in 1963, a local businessman asked when I would have my first science fair. He represented a group that had money for materials and prizes. "How does 'never' sound?" was my reply.

Since then, I have often participated, as a physics teacher and developer of science educational products, in judging local educational fairs and the state science fair. My initial hostility sprang from my gut feeling that these fairs were a competition among science teachers and not students. I wanted to develop novel ways for science students (and their teachers) to collaborate. But I have found that, for some students, this is as close as they will get to standing and defending an idea.

**TOM FORD** High school physics teacher, Waldoboro, Maine

We have a science fair at the elementary school where I teach. I think it's important because there is such an emphasis on language arts that science often gets left out.

We call them family projects because students often need and get help from an adult.

We also sometimes get volunteers from the local college or other community resources to do projects with children at school.

**LORI THOMAS** Third-grade teacher, Sacramento, California

It depends: Should parents take kids to get construction paper and the pipe cleaners? Yes. Should parents choose the topic, make the display, and then have the child put his or her name on it? No.

Learn together, explore together, then let the child express the topic in his or her best way.

While the science fair at my daughter's school is voluntary, interest increases as students talk about their work. After the fair, my daughter was chatting with her grandfather and they came up with an idea for next year's fair. An added benefit: The project can be intergenerational.

**HOPE BLECHER-SASS** English as a second language teacher, Edison, New Jersey

### WHAT'S YOUR OPINION?

**Have science fair projects grown out of control?**
To vote, visit our Web site at www.nea.org/neatoday and see the results instantly.

**Should we suspend out-of-school suspension?**
The tally on the question in the last *NEA Today*:
42% Yes 58% No

**Should teachers have students call them by their first names?**
If you'd like to take part in this future Debate, send a brief note to Alain Jehlen, **ajehlen@nea.org.**

ILLUSTRATION: CLIPART.COM

# What do you do when you **need extra money** for a classroom project?

## Tap Your Resources

I look to my natural resources: the community! One of the advantages of living in a small town is knowing practically everyone. I ask business owners, friends, family, people at my church, people I speak to and don't know.

I approach business associations such as the Rodeo Association and the Fair Association and let them know our kids are important and that we are trying to make them a better part of society.

So far, no one has turned me down to sponsor a child on a field trip.

**JEAN-MARIE SELWYN** Fourth-grade teacher, Arcadia, Florida

## Follow Many Paths

When our first-grade team needs money, we try these avenues:

■ Local service organizations. Our Lions Club has donated money for TVs and DVD/VCR players for each room.

■ Our school PTO. The PTO has provided money for Super Readers rewards, costs associated with Accelerated Reader Programs, and enrichment activities, just to name a few.

■ Business/Education Partners Project. Local businesses "adopt" a classroom and provide volunteer time as well as money for selected projects.

Of course, we always make sure to thank sponsors with letters and pictures from teachers and students!

**GERI WILLIAMS** First-grade team leader, Rehoboth Beach, Delaware

## Shop Around

Ten years ago, I was looking for a way to help teachers with science costs and started a school store. We provide school supplies and other fun items at a nominal price and the money we make is used to supplement science activities.

Each year my students partner with a local bank to borrow $500. We give collateral and go through the entire loan process.

In May we have our loan paid off and go to the bank to pick up our collateral and take a tour.

**CAROL GIBSON** Fourth-grade teacher, Devils Lake, North Dakota

## So Ask, Already!

Many times as a kindergarten teacher, I have had more ideas than money to carry them out. Local church groups have donated funds to pay for a piece of furniture I bought from a local woodworker. It was $150, but our school policy says furniture may be purchased only through a bidding process or catalog, which would have cost more.

Every year, our branch bank buys balloons for our 100th day celebration.

The point is, you gotta ask!

**GAYLE ALLEN** Kindergarten teacher, Hampshire County, West Virginia

## Multiply Your Strategies

Whenever I have needed money, I have used these resources:

■ PTO/PTA. They're always willing to support a worthy school cause.

■ Local businesses. Connect your project with that business, e.g., safety projects and an insurance agency.

■ Grants. You can apply for just about any amount. Surf the Web for grant information.

■ Donations from parents/citizens. Parents or citizens often volunteer to help and that might include money.

Remember to give donors credit for making a donation. Students may write or illustrate thank-you letters. A sincere thank-you can open the door to future requests!

**BARB WRIGHT** Guidance counselor, Lebanon, Ohio

## Reach Out

Last year, my sixth-grade science classes took part in establishing a school nature trail. I paid for some materials myself. However, when we really got going, some of the students' parents donated materials or their talents to the project.

I also contacted local businesses. Many companies will donate gift cards for purchases. And I invited the local newspapers to take pictures and interview students about the project. That gave donor companies some free advertising and lets them know they are an invaluable source.

**RICK HAZEL** Seventh-grade teacher, Morganton, North Carolina

**I STARTED A SCHOOL STORE. We provide school supplies and other fun items at a nominal price and the money is used to supplement science activities.** —CAROL GIBSON

## GOT AN ANSWER?

How do you deal with students who never do their homework?

E-mail your answer to **dilemma2@list.nea.org.** Or send by regular mail, or fax to 202-822-7206. Include your name, city, state, and job. If published, you will receive an *NEA Today* mug!

ILLUSTRATION: TED PITTS

## Sci-Fi for Middle Schoolers

Read many more answers at www.OWL.org

I teach sixth-grade science in a middle school, and I am looking for a good science fiction novel to read to my students. I especially would be interested in anything with the environment. Any suggestions?

—CHERYL BUTLER, *Colorado*

(Editor's Note: This question received an overwhelming response! The top five recommended books, in order of popularity, were: *Ender's Game* by Orson Scott Card, *The Green Book* by Jill Paton Walsh, and tied for third place, *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle, *Farmer in the Sky* by Robert Heinlein, and *The Lorax* by Dr. Seuss.)

**ANSWER:** I would suggest *The Green Book* by Jill Paton Walsh. While the reading level is lower than seventh grade, the message is great. The story is about a family that leaves Earth, where the food source is depleted, and travels to another planet to make their home. This would make a great read aloud, since it's short. There are many issues for discussion as well.

—PAT MARVIN
*seventh-grade English teacher, Bloomington, Indiana*

**ANSWER:** I highly recommend *The Exchange Student* by Kate Gilmore. I don't want to tell you too much, but it is about an exchange student from another planet and it includes the environmental challenge—an excellent novel for middle school students.

JOY JACKSON
*instructional assistant, Salem Middle School, Salem, Indiana, and English education student, Indiana University, Bloomington*

## De-Stress for Less

**What's the best, cheap, weekend getaway for de-stressing?**

**ANSWER:** I'm a single mom of a 9- and 12-year-old. Our favorite cheap de-stressing getaway is a trip to any state park. We are lucky to have three within a one-hour drive. There are state parks close to everyone. Whether you like the beach or hiking, ice skating or sledding, you can find it. For a small fee you can camp in a tent or RV or even rent a cabin. There's nothing more relaxing than enjoying Mother Nature any time of year.

—DONNA M. INZANA
*high school cafeteria cashier, Brockway, Pennsylvania*

## Periodic Plus?

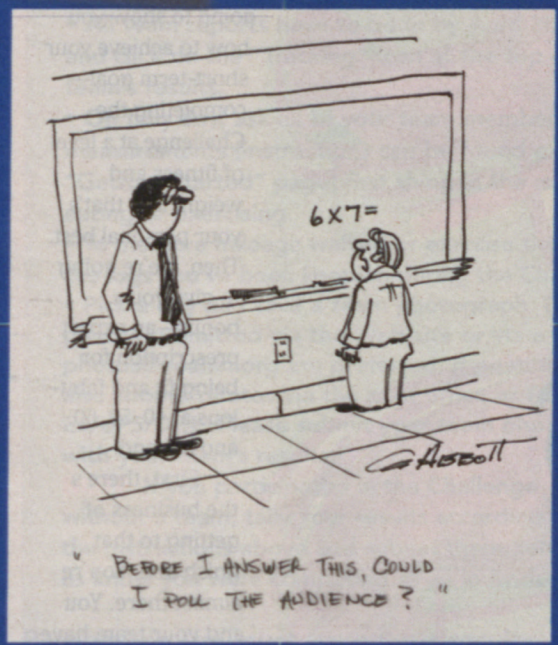
I am looking for a good Web site or software for secondary students that will allow interaction between student and computer on the Periodic Table. Most of the sites I find have lesson plans but no interaction with a computer.

—FRANCES JOLLEY, *computer lab facilitator, East St. John High School, Reserve, Louisiana*

## CLASSROOM DRAMA

**I HAVE NINE ALTERNATIVE BEHAVIOR UNIT STUDENTS** (seven boys, two girls) in my theater class, along with five regular education students. The ABU students are a combination of emotionally disturbed and students with other behavioral problems. Oh yes, I have no aide. I have spent hours trying to find some kind of drama/theater curriculum that will work for this class. Can someone help?

—DONNA BUESSING
*middle school theater arts and Spanish teacher, Beaumont, Texas*




## Share your wisdom, ask your question!

**What's your healthiest, most energy-boosting, fast snack?**

Send your answers to these or other questions on this page to **ajehlen@nea.org**. Or, send us a question you'd like to see posted. Please include your name, your job, and the community and state where you work.

For a weekly e-mail of questions, answers, and practical classroom tips, join Works4Me, one of NEA's most popular and useful services. Just send the message "subscribe Works4Me" (without the quotation marks) to **Lyris@list.nea.org**.

ILLUSTRATIONS TOP: CSA IMAGES; CARTOON: ABBOTT

# Stay the Course: Be Fit for Life!

BY SHEREE CRUTE

**Congratulations to each and every NEA Fitness Challenge team member. If you've made it this far, you've faced down your favorite food cravings, triumphed over your inner couch potato, and are in better shape than you've been in years. If you've really been having fun, you may not even realize the Challenge began seven months ago, and there are now only four weeks (that's 30 exercise days) left before we announce the champs!**

Before you start thinking about what your school's going to do with the prize money you may win, however, remember one thing. Every NEA Fitness Challenge participant has already won the most valuable prize possible—better health and a longer life. And that's a prize we're determined to help you keep. So, we're going to show you how to achieve your short-term goal—completing the Challenge at a level of fitness and weight loss that's your personal best. Then, we're going to give you a bonus—an expert prescription for being fit and fabulous at 40, 50, 60, and beyond.

First, there's the business of getting to that finish line. You're *almost* there. You and your team have sweat together, watched your waistlines together; you've probably even wept together over that midnight chocolate cheat! You've made a lot of progress, and now you just need to make that final sprint to the finish line. If you're finding it easy to stay motivated, that's great. If, however, you're hearing the siren call of your former sedentary existence, that's perfectly normal, too.

To keep those frustrating yearnings under control, "consistently reconnect with your higher purpose, your real reasons for joining the Challenge," says Marc-Simon Sagal, managing partner of the San Diego-based company, the Winning Mind (www.thewinningmind.com). Sagal, who uses psychology to help everyone from members of the New York Rangers to the U.S. Army learn to perform at their best under pressure, explains that "holding onto those clearly defined objectives" can be an added boost.

## GETTING TO THE FINISH LINE

Here's how you can beat the blahs and beat the competition:

**COMMIT ON PAPER.** "Write a letter to yourself," Sagal says, "and tell yourself how proud you are of what you've accomplished so far." Celebrate every pound lost and every mile walked. You deserve it!



ILLUSTRATION: SUSAN LEVAN

**JAZZ IT UP.** Beat boredom any way you can, says Sagal. Buy some funky new workout shoes. Try out the new salsa, Tae Bo, or Pilates class at the gym.

**DON'T GET OVERWHELMED.** If you can't handle the thought of walking 10 more miles, focus on short-term goals, Sagal advises. Pat yourself on the back for every two miles. Become engaged in the process and be happy with your accomplishments on any given day.

**FIND POWER IN PAIN.** "There's always pain and sacrifice associated with athletics," Sagal says. But rather than let the time pressures of getting to your workout, or your need to use a knee brace when you race walk, weigh you down, let that extra effort be your reward. "The amount you have to struggle is a measure of just how gigantic your achievements really are," he says.

**MAKE ALLOWANCES.** "If you can't make the full daily walk, try a series of short cardiovascular workouts," suggests Challenge fitness advisor, C.B. Yelverton. Remember, any workout you do for at least 30 minutes will suffice, even if you need to divide it into three 10-minute intervals.

**TAKE APPROPRIATE MEASURES.** If you don't seem to be losing weight fast enough, remember muscle weighs more that fat, says Yelverton. Measure your waist, hips, and thighs for a more accurate assessment of your fat loss. If your clothes are fitting better, then you're closer to your goal.

**TALK TO YOUR TEAM.** "If you, or other team members, are having trouble staying with your workout, set up a team meeting and talk it out," advises Yelverton. "Figure out fresh ways to inspire each other. Even highly trained athletes lose momentum the longer they follow a specific program."

**START TALKING TO YOURSELF.** "Positive self-talk or any affirmation that gets you going can help move you toward your goal," says Karlene Sugarman, a sports psychologist and author of *Winning the Mental Way* (Step Up Publishing, 1999).

**HAVE FAITH.** "Your mind definitely leads your body," Sugarman says. You absolutely have to believe you can drop another pound or make it another day around the track, or you just won't do it. *See yourself as a winner!*

# The Walking Challenge:

## Crossing the Finish Line

This is the last stretch! Whether you've been walking, working out to your favorite exercise video, or lifting weights at the gym, you should see significant improvements in your overall fitness level.

### PROGRESS CHECK

Each participant will have a slightly different experience, but by April or May, you should be taking at least two 45- to 60-minute walks a week, and your shorter walks should be a minimum of 30 minutes. You should be able to comfortably do strenuous cardiovascular exercises 4 to 6 days a week because your body is much stronger and leaner.

If you were overweight, you should also have lost a minimum total of 10 inches (add up inches lost on your waist, lower abs, hips, and upper thighs) or a minimum of one pants or dress size. If you've lifted weights as well, you should have lost more than 10 inches total, and you should be able to manage a slightly (5 to 10 pounds) larger amount of weight during your routine.

Once the Challenge is over, don't rest too long on your laurels. You've worked too hard to become one again with the couch and the remote control. C.B. Yelverton offers advice on designing a fitness plan to take you across the finish line and prepare you for the ultimate challenge—staying fit for life.

### DESIGN YOUR OWN FITNESS PLAN

**GET AT LEAST** seven to eight hours of sleep each night. It's the only way your

*continues on next page*

## Attention All Team Leaders

**It's almost time for the final NEA Fitness Challenge tally. To help us identify the winners, please give us an accurate team count of all the pounds and inches lost and miles walked or hours spent working out. We have just four weeks to go, so here's your countdown checklist.**

- All team reports have to be in by April 30. Log on to www.neafitness.org and click on the "Tracking" icon at the top of the page to enter your team's results.
- On tally day, ask all of your team members to calculate their weight and measurements (instructions can be found on www.neafitness.org on the "Getting Started" page) first thing in the morning, before eating or exercising.
- To measure mileage walked or exercise time spent, use the logs you've been keeping during the Challenge.
- Pick a day and take a team photograph. Digital photos submitted via the Web site or via e-mail to photos@neahin.org are preferred, if possible. You can also submit photos via the post office or Fed Ex/UPS/DHL. Please submit your team photograph with your team's results.

**NOTE:** If you participated in the Challenge without a team, tally your results according to the instructions above and submit them, letting us know you were competing as an individual.

**Remember, we must have your results in by Friday, April 30, 8 p.m., ET.**

PHOTO: PHOTODISC

muscles, mind, and immune system can recover.

**ALWAYS DO YOUR CARDIO.** Walk, run, hike, bike, swim, roller blade, ski, climb, or golf (no cart allowed) for a minimum of 20 minutes, three times a week. Increase time in 10-minute increments as you become more fit.

**STRENGTH TRAIN** at least twice a week. Strengthen your muscles with weights, yoga, a body toning class, or a video a minimum of two times a week.

**STRETCH YOUR BODY.** Try yoga or tai chi. Mix it up to keep things interesting.

**WALK, CLIMB, AND DANCE** your way through life. Move more than you sit, and move whenever you can. Take the stairs and skip the elevator. Get off a stop early and walk from the subway; park the car further away from home or school. Stand and stretch when you're on the phone. Take a family walk after dinner. And move the TV next to your exercise bike or treadmill.

# The Nutrition Challenge:

## Weighing In

You've done it! You've fought off the gastronomic temptations of the holiday season and pushed past your weight plateau. You've cleaned out your cabinets and refrigerator, tossed the fattening munchies, and replaced them with slimming snacks. As you approach your final Challenge weigh-in, you might be a little anxious about your results. Don't be. Each person sheds weight at his or her own pace for a number of reasons. Men lose weight a bit faster than women. People over 35 or 40 have slower metabolisms and may need a little more time, but with effort, everyone can shed excess pounds.

### PROGRESS CHECK

Here's how to measure your progress in late April or May. First, remember success is not measured by the pounds you've lost but in the overall changes in better food choices, so take stock. Are you eating less fat, more fruits and vegetables, and drinking water? If so, that's a triumph.

Consider your personal goal. How close are you to the target weight you selected at the beginning of the program? If you stuck to the program, you should have lost between two and four pounds per month. Even if you were healthy at the beginning of the program, you've lowered your risk of hypertension, heart disease, and diabetes if you've dropped at least 10 percent of your body weight.

### MAINTAIN YOUR GOAL WEIGHT

**IF YOU'VE REACHED** your target weight, your maintenance calories may range from 1,500 to 2,300 calories depending on your age, activity, and gender. These

## Food for Thought

**Challenge nutrition expert Molly Gee offers these tips for slimming down before your final weigh-in and for maintaining a healthy weight in years to come.**

**Drop those last pounds fast:**

- Cut back salt and sugar. They make you hold water.
- Focus on protein; give starchy, flour-filled carbs the boot.
- Fill up on fiber. Eat fresh fruits and vegetables. Try an apple before each meal. Studies show you'll lose more.

**Habits to keep:**

- Never skip a meal—eat a small, low-fat, high-fiber or high-protein meal every four to five hours.
- Keep track of what you eat.
- Weigh yourself regularly.
- Make small changes; you'll see big rewards.
- Aim for realistic weight goals.
- Make healthy eating a permanent family affair.
- Enjoy favorite foods in measured portions. Don't deprive yourself of pleasure.
- Make fruits and vegetables the center of your diet.
- Read food labels. Go to www.FDA.gov to learn what the labels mean.
- Stay hydrated—drink six to eight glasses of water a day.
- Plan to manage high-calorie situations, like holidays and vacations.
- Go shopping and kiss your fat clothes goodbye.

**AND, FINALLY, MAKE HISTORY.** If you drop 30 pounds or more and keep it off for more than one year, join the National Weight Control Registry at 800-606-NWCR (6927). Your achievement may inspire millions.

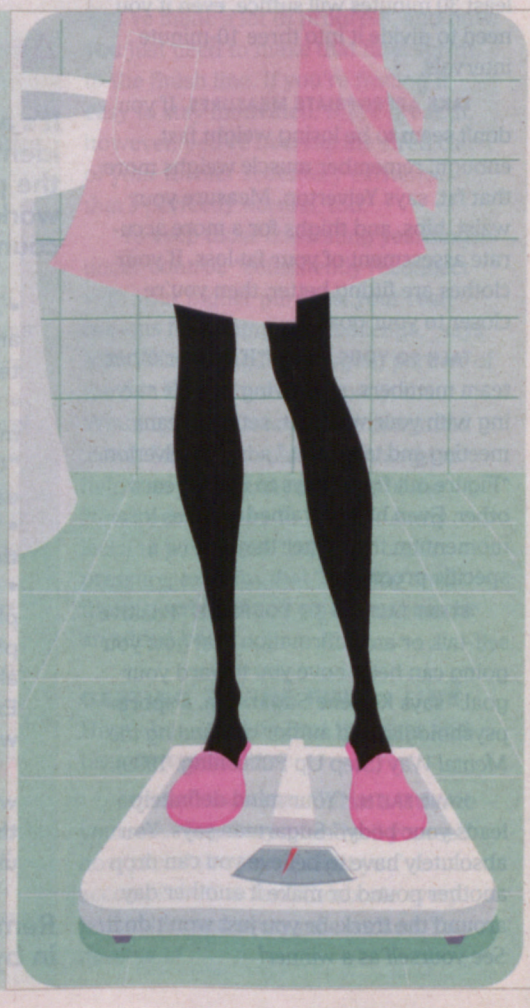


ILLUSTRATION: MCMILLAN

calories are determined by trial and error because our bodies are constantly changing. To maintain your goal weight:

**START BY ADDING** in 100 calories per day for the first week, and carefully monitor your weight and maintain or increase your activity level. For example, if you were following a 1,200-calorie plan, try a 1,300-calorie plan for one week. Of course those additional calories should come from nutrient-rich foods.

**GRADUALLY INCREASE CALORIES** until you're satisfied with the amount of food, and the weight on the scale is stable.

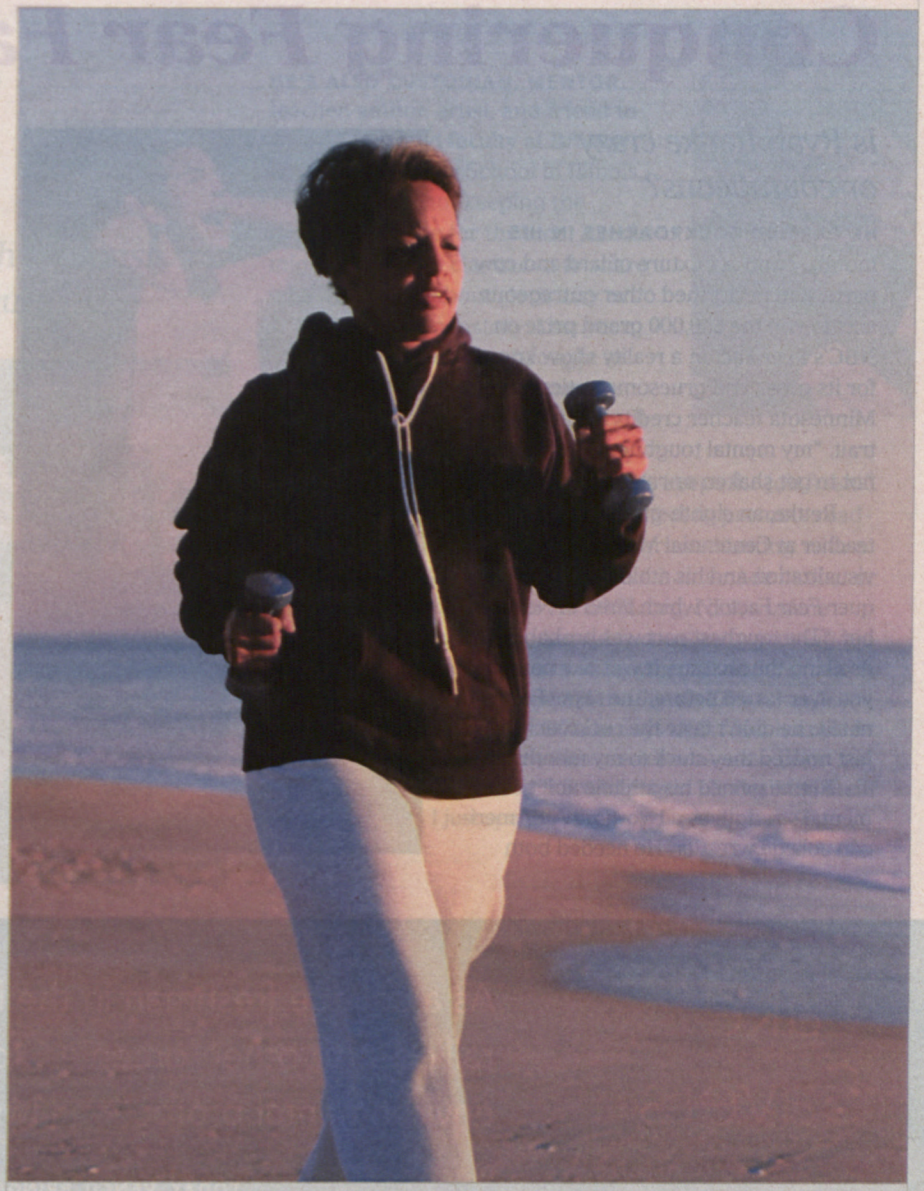
# Going the Distance

The NEA Fitness Challenge has taught you better eating habits, helped you drop a few pounds, and even made you stronger, but competing is only part of your accomplishment. You're also training for a very special *main* event—a lifetime of healthy, high-energy living. So, don't even think about slowing down. "It's never too late to start getting in shape in life, but it's always too early to stop," says Robert Butler, M.D., president of the International Longevity Center at Mt. Sinai Hospital in New York. Butler and Pamela Peeke, M.D., M.P.H., author of *Fight Fat After Forty* (Penguin, 2001), offer this advice on staying healthy and strong for the rest of your days:

**USE YOUR NATURAL GIFTS.** "Take one-tenth of what it takes to teach and regroup for a constantly changing group of kids each day, and you've got what it takes to stay with a healthy living plan," Peeke says. Draw on that strength.

**GET A GRIP.** Decide right away that life's crises will not get in your way, Peeke recommends. "When something really bad happens, do you stop brushing your teeth or combing your hair? Of course you don't," she says. "So forget 'the dog ate my treadmill' excuse." Stick with your program.

**DON'T EVER GIVE UP ON YOU.** "The greatest stresses in life come from unmet expectations," Peeke says.



There's tremendous value in doing the best you can just for you. If you can't give 100 percent on any given day, shoot for 50 percent.

**FORGET EARLY RETIREMENT.** Some doctors say older people should be very cautious about activity. Nonsense, says Butler, Pulitzer prize-winning author of *Why Survive? Being Old in America* (Johns Hopkins Press, 2003). You can and should move your body and do a weight-bearing workout well past 80, as long as your health allows.

**STAY STRONG.** "A lot of the frailty of old age is actually sarcopenia, the loss of muscle as the body ages," Butler says. The condition, which really picks up speed in your 40s and 50s, robs you of posture and balance, and is as debilitating as osteoporosis, says Butler. Weight lifting is the only sure remedy. For a simple program, pick up: *Weight Training for Dummies,* by Suzanne Schlosberg (John Wiley & Sons, 1997 or *Strength Training Past 50,* by Wayne L. Westcott (Human Kinetics, 1997).

**DEPEND ON THE BASICS.** You can do all kinds of fun things to stay fit, but at a minimum, Butler and Peeke advise, walk 10,000 steps a day. Measure your strides with a reliable step counter (try Digiwalker at www.digiwalker.com).

**EMBRACE THE FUTURE.** Forget the word "diet" and remember that exercise should be as much a part of each day as walking or sleeping. "This is not some Olympic event," says Peeke. This is your life!

PHOTO: THINKSTOCK

# Conquering *Fear Factor*

*Is Ryan Rettke crazy or courageous?*

**HE CARRIED COCKROACHES IN HIS** mouth, drank a mixture of lard and cow parts, and performed other outrageous acts to win the $50,000 grand prize on NBC's *Fear Factor,* a reality show known for its gross and gruesome antics. The Minnesota teacher credits his feat to one trait, "my mental toughness—my ability not to get shaken or rattled by anything."

Rettke, an eighth-grade Earth science teacher at Centennial Middle School, used visualization and his athleticism to conquer *Fear Factor,* which aired in November. "The toughest part was probably drinking the mixture. It was like nothing you ever tasted before," he says. Fortunately, he didn't taste the cockroaches. "I just noticed they stuck to my mouth."

Rettke gained his athletic ability and mental strength as a two-time All-American college wrestler. He needed both when he walked across 8-inch planks from a 9-story building even though he has a fear of heights.

Yielding to pressure by friends, Rettke showed up at the Mall of America in Minneapolis last spring after hearing auditions for the show would be there. Although he had more than 1,000 competitors, Rettke was not surprised he was singled out for additional interviews. "When I do something, I expect it to happen," he says. "That's the mentality I have."

After the show aired, students bombarded their teacher with questions. "I didn't get my lessons done for the next couple of days," he says.

So what has Rettke done with his prize money? He's paid off loans and bought a new TV and computer. He's also planning a trip to Jamaica, where adventurous pursuits like parasailing, jet skiing, and cliff diving will seem like tame stuff after those cow parts.

—DEITRICH CURRY

# Lake Savers

As a college freshman in the late 1960s, Terry Vencil rallied with other 'greenies' to advocate for federal environmental protection laws.

**TODAY, VENCIL BRINGS HER RALLY CLOSER** to home as she and hundreds of students fight to save Lake Estonoa in Wise County, Virginia.

Vencil's crusade began five years ago when she and students in her Appalachian ecology and physics class at St. Paul High School set out to save the town's coal-producing wetland from being turned into a parking lot or a softball field.

The lake is vital for keeping pesticides from flowing into the nearby Clinch River, says Vencil. So she and her students, known as Team Estonoa, intervened with a proposal that garnered $140,000 for a new lab and materials to landscape, sanitize, and maintain the lake. They also had the lake designated a federally protected conservation area.

The true "sweat equity" comes from 4th- to 12th-grade students who support the project by planting flowers, pulling weeds, writing new grant proposals, educating the community about the lake, and traveling to neighboring schools and national conventions to make presentations. The students have logged nearly 1,000 hours of volunteer service.

"It gives them a sense of accomplishment and ownership in their hometown," Vencil says. "It will make them environmentally conscious adults and good citizens."

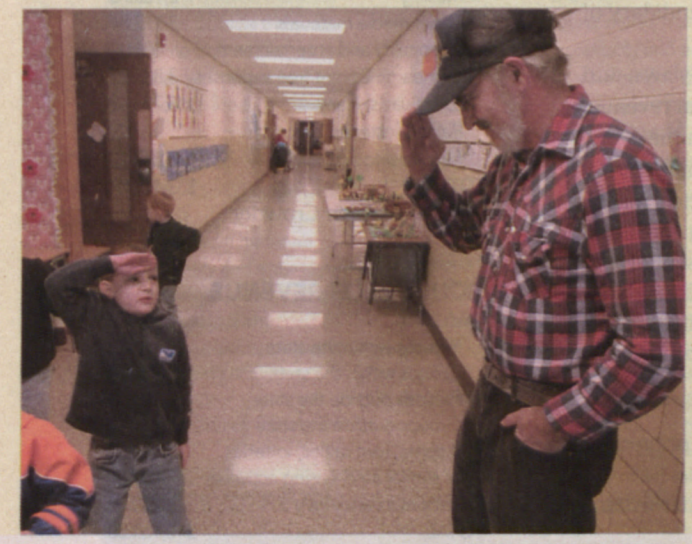
—TIFFANY MITCHELL



PHOTOS TOP: CHRIS HASTON/NBC; BOTTOM: SHAWN STREET

# Renaissance Tool Man

*Dave Arnold is Mr. Fix-It with a flourish, a tool man with a knack for nuance.*



**HE'S ALSO CUSTODIAN, MENTOR,** teacher, author, artist, and friend to the students and faculty at Brownstown Elementary School in Illinois.

When he's not keeping the grounds pristine for the kids, Arnold might step into a classroom to share what he knows about electricity or Native American history. Last year, he had a full-size tepee brought in and set up on the school grounds.

"A custodian's job is pretty much the same day after day," Arnold says. "Adding and doing a few things extra keeps the job fresh."

Whether it's wearing a Dr. Seuss hat to promote reading while waging the battle against grime, hunting with a handmade musket while floating in a homemade canoe, or writing his weekly column for OWL.org, NEA's online community for members, Arnold is constantly proving his own mantra, "There's always more you can do."

Although Arnold was named the Illinois Education Association's ESP of the Year in 2003, he says he is most humbled by the students. Last year, a fifth grader won a reading contest and was offered a choice of prizes. He declined them and asked, "Can I just spend a day working with Dave?"

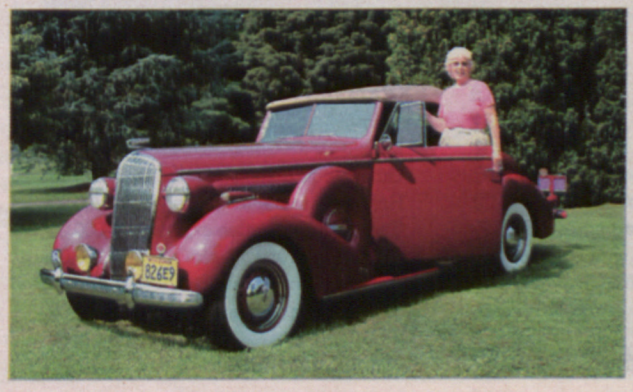
—CHRIS KOTTERMAN

# A Course in Classic Cars

*If you ask Pennsylvania member Fran Shore about her dream car, she'll tell you that it's already sitting in her driveway.*

**"BRANDY," AS SHORE AFFECTIONATELY** calls her 1936 Buick Century convertible, is one of the half-dozen antique cars she and her husband, John, have restored over the past 30 years.

"I call her Brandy because she's a beautiful wine-colored car, but she also drinks gasoline like alcohol," explains Shore. Only 717 such cars were made in 1936, and Brandy is one of five remaining today. In addition to the Buick, the Shores have restored a 1929 Model A Ford, a 1922 Durant Touring car, a 1931 Willis Ford roadster, a 1962 Corvette, a 1978 Indy Racecar Corvette, and a 1946 Cushman motor scooter, all of which have been named national winners by the Antique Automobile Club of America (AACA).



Since Shore's retirement in 1993, the couple has served as master judges for the AACA, driving their cars across the country to participate and judge as many as 12 shows a year. Shore has also been deeply committed to increasing youth interest in the antique car hobby. She's been the AACA National Youth Chair for seven years.

"As part of an educational program, I was taking a young group of children around the floor to look at the cars and all their parts," describes Shore. "A little boy tugged on my pant leg, looked up at me, and said, 'I really like you.' And that's the message right there—no matter what your hobby is, you're always a teacher."

—TAMARA ZAKIM

**GOT A TIP?**

Do you have an interesting story idea? Contact Sabrina Holcomb, section editor, at **sholcomb@nea.org.**

PHOTOS TOP: CARLOS MIRANDA; BOTTOM: EDMONDS PHOTOGRAPHY

# Final Reports of Campaign Revenues and Expenses

## NEA Standing Rule 10.E provides as follows:

**Campaign Expenses**. No portion of dues money collected at the local, regional, state, or national level shall be used to promote the candidacy of any individual for an NEA office.

Using forms provided by the Committee on Constitution, Bylaws, and Rules, each candidate shall file a preliminary report of campaign revenues and expenses, including projected revenues and expenses, with the committee prior to the opening of nominations at the Representative Assembly. A final report, on the forms provided by the committee, must be filed with the committee no later than thirty (30) days following certification of the election results. The committee shall report to the Representative Assembly, prior to any nominations or elections, whether any candidate has in any manner violated the election rules and regulations. The final report of campaign revenues and expenditures shall be printed in an appropriate NEA publication for inspection by any member.

*The following reports were filed in a timely manner and are printed pursuant to Rule 10.E.*

*Candidates are listed below by office and by alphabetical order within each office.*

## Candidate for Secretary-Treasurer

| SOURCES OF REVENUE | |
|---|---|
| Cash | |
| Persons within the state | $440.00 |
| Groups within the state | 0 |
| Persons outside the state | 6,925.00 |
| Groups outside the state | 100.00 |
| Income from raffles, lotteries, or similar fund-raising activities | 1,712.00 |
| Donations in kind | 1,350.00 |
| TOTAL | $10,527.00 |
| **EXPENSES** | |
| Printing | $3,232.23 |
| Mailing | 537.29 |
| Other media materials | 648.50 |
| Hospitality and entertainment | 534.00 |
| Campaign Committee expenses | 3,473.70 |
| Giveaway(s) if any | 419.16 |
| Raffles, lotteries, or similar fund-raising activities | 279.79 |
| TOTAL | $9,124.67 |

*Signed: Lily Eskelsen*

## Candidates for Executive Committee

| SOURCES OF REVENUE | |
|---|---|
| Cash | |
| Persons within the state | $12,776.00 |
| Groups within the state | 0 |
| Persons outside the state | 1,550.00 |
| Groups outside the state | 0 |
| Income from raffles, lotteries, or similar fund-raising activities | 1,871.00 |
| Donations in kind | 0 |
| TOTAL | $16,197.00 |
| **EXPENSES** | |
| Printing | $10,773.34 |
| Mailing | 832.02 |
| Other media materials | 1,155.02 |
| Hospitality and entertainment | 0 |
| Campaign Committee expenses | 10,753.95 |
| Giveaway(s) if any | 2,191.52 |
| Raffles, lotteries, or similar fund-raising activities | 4,715.66 |
| TOTAL | $30,421.51 |

*Signed: Mark Cebulski*

| SOURCES OF REVENUE | |
|---|---|
| Cash | |
| Persons within the state | $24,313.00 |
| Groups within the state | 0 |
| Persons outside the state | 2,940.00 |
| Groups outside the state | 0 |
| Income from raffles, lotteries, or similar fund-raising activities | 12,073.58 |
| Donations in kind | 350.00 |
| TOTAL | $39,676.58 |
| **EXPENSES** | |
| Printing | $15,013.03 |
| Mailing | 2,135.76 |
| Other media materials | 3,115.84 |
| Hospitality and entertainment | 400.00 |
| Campaign Committee expenses | 3,884.97 |
| Giveaway(s) if any | 5,726.62 |
| Raffles, lotteries, or similar fund-raising activities | 3,143.28 |
| TOTAL | $33,419.50 |

*Signed: Carolyn Crowder*

| SOURCES OF REVENUE | |
|---|---|
| Cash | |
| Persons within the state | $0 |
| Groups within the state | 0 |
| Persons outside the state | 6,119.00 |
| Groups outside the state | 0 |
| Income from raffles, lotteries, or similar fund-raising activities | 800.00 |
| Donations in kind | 3,250.00 |
| TOTAL | $10,169.00 |
| **EXPENSES** | |
| Printing | $5,253.75 |
| Mailing | 300.00 |
| Other media materials | 0 |
| Hospitality and entertainment | 200.00 |
| Campaign Committee expenses | 12,299.07 |
| Giveaway(s) if any | 2,719.52 |
| Raffles, lotteries, or similar fund-raising activities | 300.00 |
| TOTAL | $21,072.34 |

*Signed: Wayne Nadeau*

| SOURCES OF REVENUE | |
|---|---|
| Cash | |
| Persons within the state | $8,000.00 |
| Groups within the state | 0 |
| Persons outside the state | 545.00 |
| Groups outside the state | 0 |
| Income from raffles, lotteries, or similar fund-raising activities | 2,000.00 |
| Donations in kind | 4,000.00 |
| TOTAL | $14,545.00 |
| **EXPENSES** | |
| Printing | $5,200.00 |
| Mailing | 500.00 |
| Other media materials | 1,025.00 |
| Hospitality and entertainment | 700.00 |
| Campaign Committee expenses | 4,000.00 |
| Giveaway(s) if any | 1,000.00 |
| Raffles, lotteries, or similar fund-raising activities | 2,000.00 |
| TOTAL | $14,425.00 |

*Signed: Kathie Zurfluh*

# Candidates for NEA Director, ESP At-Large

### SOURCES OF REVENUE

| | |
|---|---|
| Cash | |
| Persons within the state | $2,200.00 |
| Groups within the state | 800.00 |
| Persons outside the state | 0 |
| Groups outside the state | 200.00 |
| Income from raffles, lotteries, or similar fund-raising activities | 900.00 |
| Donations in kind | 1,215.00 |
| TOTAL | $5,415.00 |

### EXPENSES

| | |
|---|---|
| Printing | $1,900.00 |
| Mailing | 250.00 |
| Other media materials | 0 |
| Hospitality and entertainment | 700.00 |
| Campaign Committee expenses | 500.00 |
| Giveaway(s) if any | 500.00 |
| Raffles, lotteries, or similar fund-raising activities | 300.00 |
| TOTAL | $4,150.00 |

*Signed: Shirley Howard*

### SOURCES OF REVENUE

| | |
|---|---|
| Cash | |
| Persons within the state | $468.92 |
| Groups within the state | 0 |
| Persons outside the state | 0 |
| Groups outside the state | 0 |
| Income from raffles, lotteries, or similar fund-raising activities | 0 |
| Donations in kind | 0 |
| TOTAL | $468.92 |

### EXPENSES

| | |
|---|---|
| Printing | $271.31 |
| Mailing | 0 |
| Other media materials | 115.12 |
| Hospitality and entertainment | 50.00 |
| Campaign Committee expenses | 86.00 |
| Giveaway(s) if any | 0 |
| Raffles, lotteries, or similar fund-raising activities | 0 |
| TOTAL | $522.43 |

*Signed: Jane Ligon*

### SOURCES OF REVENUE

| | |
|---|---|
| Cash | |
| Persons within the state | $600.00 |
| Groups within the state | 200.00 |
| Persons outside the state | 230.00 |
| Groups outside the state | 500.00 |
| Income from raffles, lotteries, or similar fund-raising activities | 185.00 |
| Donations in kind | 0 |
| TOTAL | $1,715.00 |

### EXPENSES

| | |
|---|---|
| Printing | $931.01 |
| Mailing | 92.80 |
| Other media materials | 0 |
| Hospitality and entertainment | 177.00 |
| Campaign Committee expenses | 287.51 |
| Giveaway(s) if any | 20.57 |
| Raffles, lotteries, or similar fund-raising activities | 42.05 |
| TOTAL | $1,550.94 |

*Signed: Yolanda Molina*

### SOURCES OF REVENUE

| | |
|---|---|
| Cash | |
| Persons within the state | $1,900.00 |
| Groups within the state | 0 |
| Persons outside the state | 75.00 |
| Groups outside the state | 0 |
| Income from raffles, lotteries, or similar fund-raising activities | 1,480.00 |
| Donations in kind | 200.00 |
| TOTAL | $3,655.00 |

### EXPENSES

| | |
|---|---|
| Printing | $1,230.00 |
| Mailing | 285.00 |
| Other media materials | 650.00 |
| Hospitality and entertainment | 200.00 |
| Campaign Committee expenses | 890.00 |
| Giveaway(s) if any | 300.00 |
| Raffles, lotteries, or similar fund-raising activities | 160.00 |
| TOTAL | $3,715.00 |

*Signed: Paula Monroe*

### SOURCES OF REVENUE

| | |
|---|---|
| Cash | |
| Persons within the state | $330.00 |
| Groups within the state | 120.40 |
| Persons outside the state | 0 |
| Groups outside the state | 0 |
| Income from raffles, lotteries, or similar fund-raising activities | 125.00 |
| Donations in kind | 0 |
| TOTAL | $575.40 |

### EXPENSES

| | |
|---|---|
| Printing | $220.06 |
| Mailing | 150.00 |
| Other media materials | 61.52 |
| Hospitality and entertainment | 20.14 |
| Campaign Committee expenses | 74.26 |
| Giveaway(s) if any | 0 |
| Raffles, lotteries, or similar fund-raising activities | 43.00 |
| TOTAL | $568.98 |

*Signed: Wanda Newman*

### SOURCES OF REVENUE

| | |
|---|---|
| Cash | |
| Persons within the state | $295.00 |
| Groups within the state | 655.00 |
| Persons outside the state | 0 |
| Groups outside the state | 0 |
| Income from raffles, lotteries, or similar fund-raising activities | 124.00 |
| Donations in kind | 60.00 |
| TOTAL | $1,134.00 |

### EXPENSES

| | |
|---|---|
| Printing | $364.34 |
| Mailing | 221.17 |
| Other media materials | 299.07 |
| Hospitality and entertainment | 0 |
| Campaign Committee expenses | 47.82 |
| Giveaway(s) if any | 36.53 |
| Raffles, lotteries, or similar fund-raising activities | 63.31 |
| TOTAL | $1,071.72 |

*Signed: Carolyn Smith*

### SOURCES OF REVENUE

| | |
|---|---|
| Cash | |
| Persons within the state | $1,033.25 |
| Groups within the state | 0 |
| Persons outside the state | 0 |
| Groups outside the state | 0 |
| Income from raffles, lotteries, or similar fund-raising activities | 0 |
| Donations in kind | 0 |
| TOTAL | $1,033.25 |

### EXPENSES

| | |
|---|---|
| Printing | $498.93 |
| Mailing | 40.00 |
| Other media materials | 0 |
| Hospitality and entertainment | 0 |
| Campaign Committee expenses | 95.00 |
| Giveaway(s) if any | 0 |
| Raffles, lotteries, or similar fund-raising activities | 0 |
| TOTAL | $633.93 |

*Signed: Jeri Stodola*

apr '04

# resources


54 **Book Excerpt** The Multicultural Resource Series

55 **Commemorating *Brown v. Board*** Web sites, lesson plans, videos, and more to help you teach about school desegregation.

58 **NEA's Read Across America** Keep reading! Library, book, and poetry events abound in April.

58 **Grants and Awards** Let the NEA Foundation help you fund your ideas.

59 **Global Action Week** What you can do to promote universal basic education.

59 **OWL.org** OWL offers online courses on professional development—with discounts

60 **What's Up at HIN** Guidance on turning crises into teachable moments.

61 **On TV** Learn the real story of race horse Seabiscuit.

61 **Books by NEA Members** Teaching study skills across content areas.

62 **Heads Up From NEA Member Benefits** A new home equity line of credit.

62 **Diversity Calendar** April 2 is International Children's Book Day.

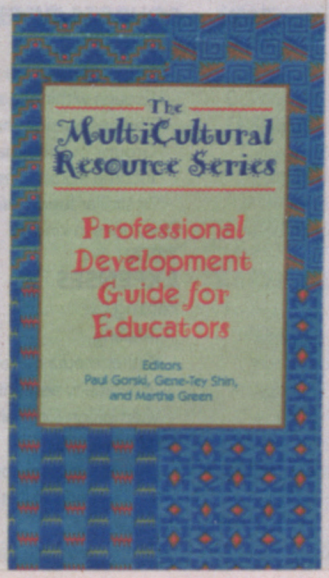

# The Multicultural Resource Series: Professional Development Guide for Educators

Paul Gorski, Gene-Tey Shin, and Martha Green, Editors
136 pp. $13.95 NEA members, $19.95 nonmembers

[ BOOK EXCERPT ]

**The old people say** being Indian today is like having your feet in two canoes. One foot in one canoe, one foot in another; one foot in one world, one foot in another. Trying to balance both canoes at the same time while the water underneath is constantly changing; trying to live in two worlds while the rules are constantly changing. This is what it is like for my students of color, as well as for me. Trying to live in the Western world while trying desperately to hold on to our cultural differences. Trying to hold on to a language that is not acknowledged as legitimate by the dominant culture, trying to hold on to traditions that appear irrelevant to the Western mind, and trying desperately to hold on to an identity that can become so easily consumed by Levi jeans, TV, and Big Macs.

So I try to integrate my world into my teaching methods. I try to build bridges between worlds instead of trying to exchange one for the other. I try to help students feel pride in where they come from so they don't feel ashamed of who they are or who they want to be. As I encourage them, I become encouraged. As I lift them up, they lift me up. As they become transformed, I become transformed.


The MultiCultural Resource Series
Professional Development Guide for Educators
Editors
Paul Gorski, Gene-Tey Shin, and Martha Green

## About the Multicultural Resource Series

Real multicultural education is ongoing, inclusive teaching that validates the lives and experiences of all children. *The Multicultural Resource Series* is a practical guide for educators committed to quality learning for all students. The first book in the series, *Professional Development Guide for Educators*, features personal essays by educators who describe how multicultural education has transformed their teaching. The guide also serves as a comprehensive source for multicultural organizations, publications, videos, and Web sites. *Resources for A Multicultural Classroom*, the second book, is an annotated resource guide to help teachers choose the best print, video, and electronic resources for students.

To order, contact the NEA Professional Library at www.nea.org/books or 800-229-4200.

# Commemorating *Brown v. Board*

**If you're planning a lesson on the Supreme Court's 1954 ruling banning segregation in public schools, celebrating the 50th anniversary of the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* decision next month, or just looking for good civil rights resources, take advantage of the range of lesson plans, Web sites, videos, and publications focused on this event.**

## On the Web

### HORIZONS OF OPPORTUNITIES SITE

For a brief overview of *Brown v. Board*, a summary of the state of desegregation in the nation today, and a school integration timeline, check out NEA's jam-packed site "Horizons of Opportunities: Celebrating 50 Years of *Brown v. Board of Education*, May 17, 1954–2004" at www.nea.org/brownvboard/.

The site features a diversity timeline of NEA's support of and contribution to school integration and diversity, as well as a nationwide calendar of events commemorating *Brown v. Board*.

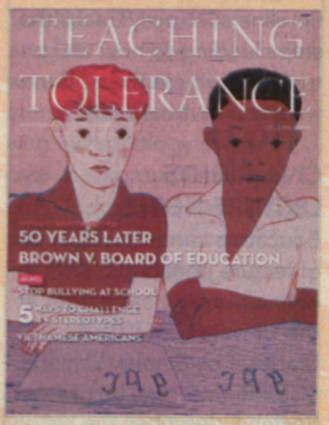
At the site you may order a classroom poster, in addition to accessing links to key reports, including:

- *Brown at 50: King's Dream or Plessy's Nightmare?*—NEA co-sponsored this 2004 Harvard Civil Rights Project report that examines the state of segregation in today's schools.
- *Parsing the Achievement Gap*—An ETS study presenting the links between student achievement and core factors that are often related to students' racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic status.

Horizons of Opportunities also links to another notable resource—the Smithsonian Institution. In May, the National Museum of American History debuts a new exhibit co-sponsored by NEA: "Separate But Not Equal: Brown v. Board of Education." To complement the exhibit, the museum will offer education programs and materials, including teacher resources for grades 4–12; school tours beginning fall 2004; a teacher workshop in the summer of 2004; and a Web site with a virtual exhibition and educational materials.

### *TEACHING TOLERANCE* SPECIAL ISSUE

Published twice a year, *Teaching Tolerance* magazine showcases innovative tolerance initiatives in schools across the country. The spring 2004 issue is a special anniversary edition of the *Brown v. Board* decision. Five articles and a timeline help students in grades 7–12 understand the legacy of the Supreme Court decision and the continuing struggle to integrate U.S. schools. Of particular note is a Q&A with prominent Americans (including Reg Weaver), who reflect on the legacy and impact of *Brown v. Board*. The magazine also includes classroom activity suggestions, project ideas, and resources that accompany the articles. The issue may be downloaded in PDF format from the Web at www.tolerance.org/teach/expand/mag/index.jsp. To subscribe to *Teaching*




*Tolerance*, send a written request on school letterhead by mail or fax to: Teaching Tolerance, Order Dept., 400 Washington Avenue, Montgomery, AL 36104; fax 334-956-8486. Magazine subscriptions are free to educators.

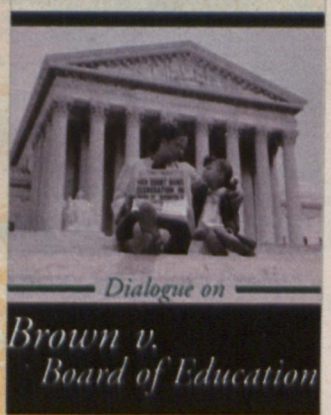
### NATIONAL ARCHIVES LESSON PLANS

The National Archives and Records Administration presents lesson plans built around key documents in its collection, including the judgment rendered in *Brown v. Board*. The site's activities let students work with the documents to discern the Court's intent. Issues from Eisenhower's presidency that may have affected the outcome of *Brown v. Board* are also addressed, such as the nomination of Chief Justice Earl Warren.

Another section on the site, "Frontiers in Civil Rights," discusses a different 1950s civil rights court case, outlining activities in which students analyze historic photographs. Teaching activities are correlated to national standards and include bibliographies. Go to: www.archives.gov/digital_classroom/lessons/brown_v_board_documents/brown_v_board.html.

### DIALOGUE ON *BROWN V. BOARD* OF EDUCATION

The American Bar Association offers a guide to conducting a dialogue on *Brown v. Board*, available at www.abanet.org/publiced/conversations/brownvboard.pdf. The packet, which can be downloaded in PDF format and printed, includes discussion questions about the effects of the decision on students both then and now, as well as a series of discussions about other racial




issues in education. Issues include the true nature of equality under the law, the role of schools in social change, racial preference in

**Commemorating *Brown v. Board*** *continues on next page*

**Commemorating Brown v. Board** *continued*

college admissions, and a discussion of who is guilty for the harms of slavery and segregation. The material can be used together or separately. Also included is a set of ground rules for participants, outlining appropriate behavior for discussing different viewpoints.

### CIVIL RIGHTS CHRONOLOGY

A companion to Yale Law professor Jack Balkin's *What Brown v. Board of Education Should Have Said* (NYU Press, 2001), this Web site provides an exhaustive timeline of civil rights history. Covering the time period from 1502 when the first slaves arrived in the New World through 2000 when the Confederate flag was lowered from the state capitol in South Carolina, the timeline succinctly traces the steps leading to how we got to where we are today. Go to www.brownvboard.com.

### CIVIL RIGHTS LECTURE NOTES

Educators can review this set of lecture notes from an online history class taught at the University of Wisconsin in Madison by Stanley Schultz. "Civil Rights in an Uncivil Society" describes the history of the civil rights movement from the 1920s through the presidency of John F. Kennedy. Also be sure to

check out the "Hitchhiker's Guide to American History," which includes hundreds of links on various topics, including African Americans and civil rights. Go to http://us.history.wisc.edu/hist102/lectures/lecture26.html.

### JEFFERSON AND *BROWN V. BOARD*

This Web page from PBS discusses *Brown v. Board of Education* with Thomas Jefferson's belief in universal education in mind. In addition to providing a succinct summary of the issues facing the court, it urges students to consider the issue of de facto segregation, pointing out that—just as Thomas Jefferson believed in equal rights for all but still owned slaves—simply saying that something is wrong does not necessarily solve the problem. Go to www.pbs.org/jefferson/enlight/brown.htm.

### CIVIL RIGHTS AND OUR NATIONAL PARKS

Ever wanted to visit the places you read about in your history books? The National Park Service has compiled a map of important civil rights venues from the National Register of Historic Places at www.cr.nps.gov/nr/travel/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[1] Home equity financing provided by Wells Fargo Banks. Membersa FDIC. ©2004 Wells Fargo Banks. All Rights Reserved. **Home equity lines of credit secured by homestead properties are not available in Texas.** [2] **Transportation not included with the getaway.** Offer valid for new purchase or refinance mortgage loan applications taken and closed through June 30, 2004 through this program. This offer is available for first mortgages through Wells Fargo Home Mortgage and not available on home equity loans and lines of credit and cannot be combined with any other program or offer. Contact your mortgage consultant for additional details, terms and conditions. The offer is administered by BI, which is not affiliated with Wells Fargo Home Mortgage and is subject to change without notice. The benefits of the **NEA Home Financing Program®** cannot be combined with any other offer. NEA Home Financing Program is a registered mark and NEA. Getaway is a service mark of NEA's Member Benefits Corp. Wells Fargo Home Mortgage, Inc. originates mortgage loans in New Hampshire under License No. 5757 MB and is a New Jersey Department of Banking Licensed Mortgage Banker. ©2004 Wells Fargo Home Mortgage, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Information is accurate as of date of printing and is subject to change without notice. Credit subject to approval. 4/04 **Branches DM# DMCNEAHOTEL HFNT0404**

civilrights/index.htm. A click on any of the locations on the map reveals photos and a description of the events that transpired there. An overview of the civil rights movement can also be found on this site.

### EXAMINING THE ISSUES

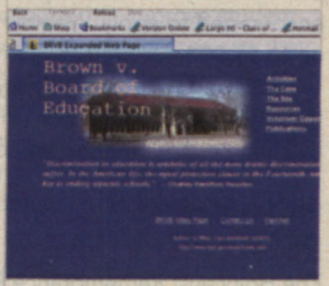
Help students understand the key issues of the *Brown v. Board* decision by visiting the Landmark Supreme Court Cases site at www.landmarkcases.org/brown. The site includes background information, excerpts from the Court decision, and student activities. Activities are organized according to how much instruction time a teacher has and range from simple reading and discussion assignments to moot court activities, political cartoon analysis, and Web site evaluation.

### FOR THE YOUNGER CROWD

Created by The Brown Foundation, the *Brown v. Board* online activity booklet for young children includes a word search, an object hunt, and a maze that leads students to the U.S. Supreme Court. Each page includes a brief description of the activity's relevance to *Brown v. Board* and the civil rights movement. An online exhibit, "In Pursuit of Freedom: Kansas and the African American Public School Experience, 1855–1955," accompanies the booklet and features photographs with captions describing notable schools and figures in Kansas' struggle for equal opportunity in public education. Go to www.brownvboard.org.

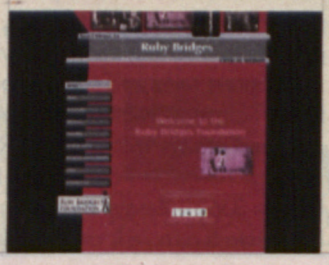
### MONROE ELEMENTARY

The Web site of the Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site of Monroe Elementary gives information about the historic school at www.nps.gov/brvb/home.htm. Also, find out about *Bolling v. Sharpe*, *Briggs v. Elliot*, and other cases related to the *Brown v. Board* case.




### RUBY BRIDGES FOUNDATION

The official Web site of the Ruby Bridges Foundation, www.rubybridges.com, brings visitors face-to-face with the now-grown 6-year-old girl who integrated New Orleans' schools. Articles by and about Ruby Bridges are on this site.



### NAACP HONORS BROWN

The NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund Web site, www.brownmatters.org, commemorates *Brown v. Board* with a chronology of the case, background information, and articles describing the legacy of the famous ruling after 50 years.

### NPR SERIES

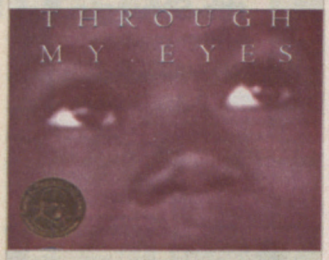
National Public Radio presents a three-part series, which can be listened to online, that looks behind the scenes at the Supreme Court deliberations that produced the landmark 1954 ruling. Segments include: "Bringing the Case to the Supreme Court," "The Court Gets a New Leader," and "The Justices Rule, and Face New Challenges." The site also links to other related NPR stories and Web resources. Go to www.npr.org/features/feature.php?wfId=1537409.

### HEAR THE BROWN DECISION

Tired of reading about the court case? Then listen to an excerpt of the *Brown v. Board* of Education decision as it is being read. This site also gives a brief background on Linda Brown and the Brown case at www.digisys.net/users/hootie/brown/case.htm.

# In Print

### THROUGH HER EYES




In *Through My Eyes*, Ruby Bridges tells her own story about how she, as a 6-year-old, became the first Black student ever at the William Frantz Public School in New Orleans, Louisiana, on November 14, 1960. 64 pp. $5.95 from Scholastic. To order, go to www.scholastic.com.

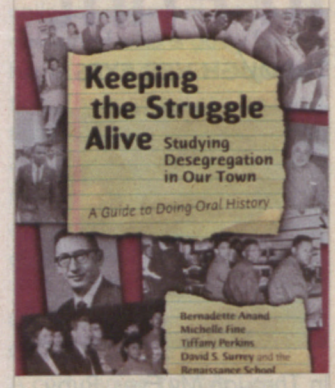
### HISTORY OF BROWN

*Brown v. Board of Education: A Brief History with Documents* by Waldo E. Martin Jr. can supplement lessons on *Brown*. It offers versions of relevant legal briefs and court decisions. The paperback provides the social history brought to life by newspaper editorials, political cartoons, and other materials from the Brown decision era. 254 pp. $16.95 from Bedford/St. Martin's. To order, go to www.bedfordstmartins.com.

### ORAL HISTORY GUIDE

*Keeping the Struggle Alive: Studying Segregation in Our Town* by Bernadette Anand, Michelle Fine, Tiffany Perkins, and David Surrey chronicles how students in a

**Commemorating *Brown v. Board*** *continues on next page*




New Jersey public middle school learned about their community's history of desegregation through a project that had them not only researching, but interviewing townspeople who participated in the struggle to desegregate schools up North. The volume includes a curriculum guide for teaching oral history that can be adopted to any classroom and shows teachers how to perform social action projects that involve youth in the complex issues concerning race relations and integration. 96 pp., $12.95 from Teachers College Press. To order, go to http://store.tcpress.com/0807741450.shtml.

# On Film

### THE ROAD TO BROWN

This 56-minute video from California Newsreel details the story of Black lawyer Charles Hamilton Houston, guiding high school students step by step from the world of "separate but equal" sanctioned by the *Plessy* Supreme Court decision through Houston's precedent-setting cases, which chipped away at Jim Crow education and set the stage for the *Brown* ruling. Schools can purchase the video for $49.95. Free preview copies are available for two weeks. Go to www.newsreel.org/nav/title.asp?tc=CN0076.

### A SEPARATE PLACE

This hourlong documentary from the Hagley Library outlines the ambiguous legacy of segregation and desegregation in African-American education, focusing on schools built by P.S. du Pont. The video features contemporary images and compelling interviews with teachers and students. $10.95. To order, go to www.hagley.lib.de.us/store.html.

# Keep Reading!

The Seussentennial celebration may be over but don't let that stop you, there's lots more reading excitement ahead! The winners of NEA and Youth Service America's Youth Leaders for Literacy grants will culminate their winning reading projects for National Youth Service Day, April 16–18. Check out the Reading Resource calendar at www.nea.org/readacross to celebrate Poetry month this April, and don't forget El día de los niños/El día de los libros, April 30. And stay tuned for the Stories for Heroes Arthur Audiobook, a collection of Arthur stories read by a cast of celebrity readers. The proceeds will benefit NEA's Health Information Network, The Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation (EGPAF), and the Bubel-Aiken Foundation.

# Grants and Awards

THE NEA FOUNDATION FOR THE IMPROVEMENT of EDUCATION
www.nfie.org

### THE NEA FOUNDATION JUNE GRANTS

Do you have an innovative idea that will improve student achievement, but lack the funds to bring it to life? The NEA Foundation's *Innovation Grants* can help.

Have you discovered a professional development opportunity that will benefit you and your colleagues, your students, and your school? Look to the Foundation's *Learning & Leadership Grants.*

**Apply by June 1** for *Innovation Grants* and *Learning & Leadership Grants* and you will be notified by November 15. Applications are accepted on an ongoing, year-round basis, so proposals received after June 1 will automatically be included in the next review cycle. Grants fund activities for 12 months from the award date.

NEA members just like you have applied for and received over a thousand grants through the years. Read about their projects at www.nfie.org, and then submit your own idea. *Innovation Grants* and *Learning & Leadership Grants* are available for all subjects, including the arts, literacy, science, and technology.

All members who are practicing U.S. public school teachers in grades K–12, education support professionals, or higher education faculty and staff at public colleges and universities are encouraged to apply. We now offer **bigger and better grants—up to $5,000** per project—to fund your BIG ideas.

Applying for a grant is easy, so why wait? Visit www.nfie.org today for more information on all of our grant programs, including guidelines and an application, or call 202-822-7840.

### HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE ESSAY CONTEST

The Holocaust Remembrance Project is a national essay contest for high school students designed to encourage the study of the Holocaust. Scholarships and other prizes will be awarded to students in first, second, and third place categories. First place winners will participate in an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., to visit the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. In addition, scholarships of up to $5,000 will be awarded to the first place national winners.

Students entering this year's contest should study the Holocaust and then, in an essay of no more than 1,200 words: (a) analyze why it is so vital that the remembrance, history, and lessons of the Holocaust be passed to a new generation; and (b) suggest what they, as students, can do to combat and prevent prejudice, discrimination, and violence in our world today.

Contest rules and submission requirements can be found at http://holocaust.hklaw.com/2004ContestInfo/2004ContestInfo.asp.

**Send essays to** Holocaust Remembrance Project, Holland & Knight Charitable Foundation, Inc., P.O. Box 2877, Tampa, Florida 33601. **Essays** must be received at the address above no later than 5 p.m., ET, on April 30, 2004.



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## BOOKS FOR RURAL LIBRARIES

The Libri Foundation helps rural libraries acquire new, quality, hardcover children's books they could not otherwise afford to buy. Libraries are qualified on an individual basis but should serve a population under 10,000, have a limited budget, be in a rural area, and have an active children's department.

The Foundation works with the library's Friends of the Library or other local organizations to encourage local support of libraries. The Friends, or other sponsors, can contribute from $50 to $350, which the Foundation matches on a 2-to-1 ratio. Thus, a library can receive up to $1,050 worth of hardcover children's books through the Foundation's Books For Children program. The local librarian then selects the books from the Foundation's 700-title booklist, which has been highly praised by participating librarians for the quality and variety of titles offered.

Applications are accepted from independent libraries; libraries that are part of a county, regional, or cooperative library system; and school libraries only if they also serve as the public library.

To request an application packet, e-mail your name and your library's name and mailing address to librifdn@teleport.com. Or contact The Libri Foundation, P.O. Box 10246, Eugene, OR 97440; 541-747-9655; fax: 541-747-4348; www.librifoundation.org.

## UNSUNG INNOVATORS IN EDUCATION

ING's Unsung Heroes program awards funds to K–12 educators generating new methods and techniques that improve student learning. Educators submit applications describing projects they have initiated or would like to create. Applications are judged on teachers' innovative teaching methods, creative educational projects, and ability to have a positive influence on students.

One hundred finalists will receive $2,000 awards made payable jointly to the recipient and to his or her school. Of the 100 finalists, three are selected for additional awards.

Go to www.ing-usa.com/us/about/connect/education/unsung_heroes.html to download an application or call 866-464-8727. The application deadline is April 30, 2004.

# Help Fight for Global Literacy

About one in five children around the world are not in school today, according to UNESCO. It's a sad reality, but NEA and Education International (EI), the world organization of educators' unions, are working to change it, and you can help.

### GLOBAL ACTION WEEK: APRIL 19–23

As part of the Global Campaign for Education, an organized global literacy drive supported by EI and other organizations, NEA is working to encourage the U.S. government to honor its international commitment to fund Education For All in developing countries with $1 billion a year by 2006, roughly three times the current level.

To support this effort, you can celebrate Global Action Week, April 19–23, by talking with your students about what governments can do to achieve universal basic education by 2015. Links to information and lesson ideas for teaching about the global education drive, which features the Biggest Lobby Ever in 2004, can be found at www.nea.org/international. This year's campaign poster shows TV's *West Wing* actors Bradley Whitford (Josh) and Dulé Hill (Charlie) with photos of two girls who are not in school. The lesson materials include the stories of the girls.

Education is the key factor in economic development and human rights, particularly for those children most likely not receiving education—girls. And universal quality public education supports development and avoids the misery that can lead to terrorism, notes NEA staffer Joanne Eide.

## OWL.ORG

# Too Busy for Professional Development? Try an Online Course

**Spring—and an educator's mind turns to thoughts of... professional development!**

Every year, educators across the United States participate in professional development courses to attain an advanced degree or obtain continuing education credits to meet state licensing requirements. As a busy teacher or education support professional, you may be thinking about taking a course or two yourself, but you know how daunting it can be to take classes on weeknights and weekends in addition to keeping up with your other responsibilities. That's why we've created an online solution for busy educators. Through OWL.org, NEA's professional Web site for members, you can enroll in a wide variety of online education courses provided by widely recognized companies such as Cantor and Associates, Pearson Education, and the Center for Online Professional Development. Best of all, NEA members receive special course discounts available nowhere else. Check out the convenience and savings at www.OWL.org.

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A service of the National Education Association and its State and Local Affiliates

# What's Up at HIN

## TIPS FOR DEALING WITH CRISIS, TRAUMA, AND LOSS

When a traumatic event happens, how do you handle it with kids? Decisions about how to respond can be a very personal matter for teachers and families. Much depends on one's personal style, past experience, nature of the crisis event, and the social/emotional climate. With support from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the NEA Health Information Network has developed a one-page handout that offers guidance on turning crisis events into teachable moments. For more information on the topic, e-mail mentalhealth@neahin.org. To view or download a copy, visit www.neahin.org/programs/mentalhealth/index.htm.

## 'WORKING TOGETHER, SO EVERYONE CAN BREATHE BETTER'

Mark your calendars—May 2004 is Asthma Awareness Month and May 4th is World Asthma Day. NEA HIN is joining with the U.S. EPA and other federal and nonprofit organizations to sponsor asthma education events around the country. The events will raise awareness about the indoor and outdoor pollutants that trigger asthma episodes and how to avoid or eliminate them. Join NEA HIN and the EPA by sponsoring an asthma awareness program in your school, local association, or community. Free copies of EPA's World Asthma Day Event Planning Kit are available at www.epa.gov/asthma. To learn more about NEA HIN's asthma initiative, visit www.asthmaandschools.org or contact Jennie Young (jyoung@ nea.org) to learn how to sponsor an asthma event in your school.

## GOOD HEALTH BOOSTS TEST SCORES

New research emphasizes the strong connection between student academic achievement and student health and well-being. A new promotional poster from NEA HIN sends this key message and highlights programs available to NEA members. If you would like to receive a free copy of the poster for your school, contact NEA HIN at 202-822-7570 or neahin@nea.org. You can also visit www.neahin.org to download a free 8 1/2- by 11-in. copy and to learn more about the link between student achievement and health.

Why Wait? Get a Grant.
The NEA Foundation has bigger and better grants than ever to fund your BIG ideas—up to $5,000 per project. Applications are accepted year-round and reviewed in September, February, and June. Apply today at www.nfie.org or call 202.822.7840.
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# On TV

### THE TRUE STORY OF SEABISCUIT

*A&E Classroom, April 26, 7 a.m., ET.*

Seabiscuit was a smallish brown "runt" with an attitude some teachers will know quite well. His lack of interest in racing changed when he was purchased by enigmatic horse trainer Tom Smith, who "read" Seabiscuit and understood that he had to be coaxed rather than prodded. Smith gave Seabiscuit plenty of rest, plenty of animal friends, and better food. Seabiscuit repaid the kindness by winning most of his races. He would race to the front, slow down to let the second-place horse catch up, and then race off again. This documentary includes many interviews: a horse trainer who befriended Smith, a jockey who trained with him, and a fan present at the famous Santa Anita race when Seabiscuit finally won the $100,000 purse. A&E Classroom has developed a teacher's guide for middle and high school social studies students, which can be found at www.aetv.com/class/teachingmaterials/index.html.

### CONFIDENT FOR LIFE: KIDS AND BODY IMAGE

*Disney, April 6, 3 a.m., ET.*

Designed for kids and teens, this documentary explores the relationship between body image and self-esteem as well as the influence of peers and the media on self-worth. Can be taped and used in the classroom for one year with teaching materials at http://psc.disney.go.com/disneychannel/cableintheclassroom.

### RESTORE AMERICA: A SALUTE TO PRESERVATION

*HGTV, April 19, 5 a.m., ET.*

In partnership with The National Trust for Historic Preservation, this series recognizes restoration efforts at 12 national sites. This month's program features the Conservatory of Flowers, the oldest public conservatory in the Western Hemisphere, boasting a collection of rare tropical plants; the Bodie Island Lighthouse, a classic example of an American light station; and Cranbrook House, an outstanding example of early 20th century design and craftsmanship, still in use for its original purpose. The show can be taped and used in the classroom for one year.

### GENERAL GEORGE C. MARSHALL: SOLDIER AND STATESMAN

*A&E Classroom, April 22, 7 a.m., ET.*

Marshall never led a major military engagement, but as Roosevelt's Army Chief of Staff, he did create the order of battle during World War II. Marshall was a visionary who understood that the army had to mature and that this second war had to be fought globally. Later, as Truman's Secretary of State, he envisioned a plan to help win the peace in Europe. Marshall's reasoned and stirring speech to Congress led to what became known as the Marshall Plan, and the rebuilding of Europe began. This

## BOOKS BY NEA MEMBERS

### TEXTS AND TESTS: TEACHING STUDY SKILLS ACROSS CONTENT AREAS

**By Rona F. Flippo**

Developed for teachers of grades 1–8 by a professor of reading education, this book is a primer of strategies for studying and learning from text. You will be able to enhance your current teaching techniques to improve students' reading, writing, thinking, and learning across the curriculum. Chapters include test preparation and test-taking skills, as well as strategy systems for reading, studying, and learning. Each chapter has reflection and "try it out" activities, plus an appendix of the most-used studying and learning forms. 144 pp. $17 from Heinemann. To order, call 800-225-5800 or e-mail custserv@heinemann.com.

### GRANDPARENT POEMS

**Compiled by John Micklos Jr., illustrated by Layne Johnson**

In honor of the love and strength that grandparents bring to their families, John Micklos presents this collection of 22 poems by Lee Bennett Hopkins, Jeff Moss, Nikki Grimes, and Micklos himself, among others. The poems depict the fun and generosity that grandparents provide, focusing on the special bond that exists between children and their grandparents. 32 pp. $15.95 from Boyd's Mill Press. To order, call 877-512-8366 or fax 800-874-8817.

### PARIS BY BISTRO: A GUIDE TO EATING WELL

**By Christine Graf and Dennis Graf**

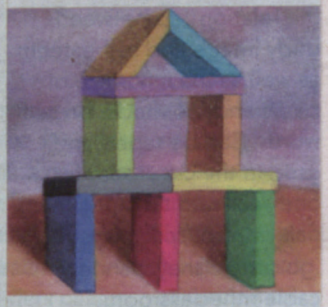
Here's a charming guide for anyone planning a trip to Paris who wants to experience a distinctive aspect of Parisian life, a leisurely meal in a bistro. Christine Graf, a French teacher for over 20 years, recommends where to find extraordinary (and inexpensive) service, food, and atmosphere, while avoiding the tourist traps. She also throws in a bit of history on each bistro. Included is a glossary of useful terms on French cuisine. 280 pp. $17.95 from Interlink Publishing Group, Inc. To order, go to www.interlinkbooks.com/Paris_by_Bistro.html.

TO SEE MORE, VISIT "BOOKS BY NEA MEMBERS ONLINE" AT WWW.NEA.ORG/NEATODAY.

PHOTO: CORBIS

# Heads Up From NEA Member Benefits

The **NEA Home Financing Program®**, provided exclusively by Wells Fargo Home Mortgage, proudly introduces the **Home Asset Management℠ Account!** It's a revolutionary new home financing tool that allows you to make the most of your home ownership investment from day one.



**Due to the refinancing boom, the NEA Home Financing Program processed more mortgage loans and refinances last year than in the previous eight years combined!**

The Home Asset Management℠ Account is a home equity line of credit that's taken out simultaneously with a new first mortgage or a refinance. As your home increases in value, or the mortgage is paid down, the home equity line of credit *automatically* increases. You won't need to re-apply for a larger line of credit down the road, and you'll receive detailed statements that will track important changes in your equity.

**Call 1-800-NEA-4-YOU (1-800-632-4968) to learn more!**

## ALWAYS FELT YOU WERE 'ABOVE AVERAGE?'

Well, it's true! Statistics show that educators have better than average driving records: fewer accidents and fewer claims than the general population. To recognize this, the NEA Members Auto & Home Insurance Program®, underwritten by California Casualty, offers NEA members preferred rates and discounts to cover their auto and home insurance needs. Features include:

- low rates with your NEA member discount
- multi-policy discounts for Auto & Home coverage
- discounts for family members who are good students or mature drivers
- theft of personal property from your vehicle covered up to $250—including school supplies

It's easy to get a quick, no-obligation quote over the phone by calling toll-free: 1-888-744-9717. **Start saving now!**

documentary makes great use of actual footage of important events, along with interviews of Colin Powell, Paul Nitze, and others. A study guide is available at www.biography.com/class.

### THE CALL OF THE WILD

*Hallmark, April 26, 3 a.m., ET, check local listings.*
Rick Schroder stars in this 1993 adaptation of Jack London's story of self-discovery in the Yukon, which can be taped and used in the

classroom for one year. Teaching materials can be found online at www.hallmarkchannel.com.

### THE LEGACY OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

*Discovery Channel, April 29, 9 a.m., ET, check local listings.*
This hourlong program chronicles Rome's growth, downfall, and legacy, including its expansion from military conquests, letters from Roman soldiers, and the Byzantine Empire. Can be taped and used in the classroom for one year.

### AMERICAN PERSPECTIVES

*C-SPAN, Saturdays, 8 p.m. and 11 p.m., ET, check local listings for specific dates and times.*
This program includes coverage of cultural and historical events, such as tours of unique museums or speeches by notable figures. Can be taped and used in the classroom forever. Teaching materials are available at www.c-span.org/classroom.

*On TV listings are provided by KIDSNET, a national resource for children's media in Washington, D.C., www.kidsnet.org and by Cable in the Classroom's* Access Learning *magazine at www.ciconline.org.*

## DIVERSITY CALENDAR

### APRIL

**APRIL 2—INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S BOOK DAY**
This day helps young children develop an understanding of other cultures through literature. For more, go to www.ibby.org.

**APRIL 6–7—PASSOVER**
This Jewish feast, which begins at sunset on April 5, celebrates the emancipation of Jews from Egyptian rule.

**APRIL 6—MORMON CHURCH FOUNDED**
On this day in 1830, Joseph C. Smith and Oliver Cowdery founded the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

**APRIL 11—EASTER**
Christians celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ on this day, observed on the Sunday following the first full moon that occurs on or after the vernal equinox.

### MAY

**MAY 5—CINCO DE MAYO**
The anniversary of the Mexican victory over the French army in the 1862 Battle of Puebla.

**MAY 3—WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY**
The independence of the international press and of journalists is celebrated on this day. For more, contact UNESCO at 212-963-5995.

**MAY 17—50TH ANNIVERSARY OF SCHOOL DESEGREGATION RULING**
The Supreme Court unanimously ruled racial segregation in public schools to be unconstitutional on this day in 1954.



PHOTO LEFT: HALLMARK CHANNEL; RIGHT: KAY CHERNUSH

# MARKETPLACE apr '04

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# Moving Mountains

BY CHRIS BOWEN

## A bagful of books in a place without hope.

You're never quite sure what you'll be called on to teach. Sure, there's reading, math, and writing. But then, there's something hovering between the lines. Sometimes it's tangible. Sometimes it's just modeling adult behavior. Good adults give you a smile, appropriate attention, and they show up on a regular basis. Sadly, kids don't always know what that looks like. Other times it's nothing tangible at all. You're just there to guide them. You're a catalyst. An idea, or a feeling, has been coming into focus, and you're there to bring it into sharper view.

At our hospital school, teaching is more about what hovers between the lines, and not as much about reading and writing. Rancho Los Amigos is one of the country's top rehab facilities. You don't go there for aches and pains. You go there when your life has been changed permanently by a spinal chord injury. It can be difficult reaching a kid at the beginning of this sort of tragedy, trying to convince them that books still matter.

On the outside, the place still has its shine. New, clean brick and freshly paved parking lots. When I first saw the place, I assumed I'd find upper middle-class patients, gritting their teeth, collecting themselves, and getting on with their lives with the help of the best possible treatment. That's not what I encountered.

Sure, there's excellent care. But there are also angry voices and menacing tattoos up and down every arm. I worry that eye contact might be taken as aggression or disrespect. I notice small teardrop-shaped tattoos and learn they symbolize someone you've killed. Years ago, most spinal chord injuries were the result of birth defects or car crashes. Now, it's gunshot wounds. Even though I'm the only able-bodied guy here, I'm the only one who shows fear.

I remind myself that fear is a luxury. It says, "I have things in my life worth losing." The simple act of feeling is a luxury, too. Sometimes, just briefly, I wish I were harder. Maybe a bullet wound to show. But only for a moment.

I come bearing a bagful of books. You can still open up a younger kid with a good book. There's still enough hope inside a little kid that a good book can attach itself to. But here on the second floor, we're all out of hope. I know my books are just props, like holding a drink at a party. Just something to hold in your hand.

I find the right room, and a gentler face than those in the hallway greets me. I don't see any tattooed teardrops so that's a good sign. Maybe I have a shot at this guy with the right book. But our conversation is stunted. I stare out the window searching for small talk. I digress right into weather.

**Chris Bowen** in front of the Rancho Los Amigos.

"Looks like rain again tonight."

He gives me a polite, "hmm."

"You can't even see the mountains today." Something about the mountains catches his attention.

"Mountains? What mountains?" I point north through the windows.

"Those mountains. Right over there. You can't see them at all today." He cranes his neck from the bed.

"Mountains? There are mountains in the parking lot?" He smirks.

"No. Right through those trees," I say and he laughs.

"You crazy. There are no mountains here." He's not kidding. He's a Southern California native and he really has no clue that you can usually see mountains on a good day. No idea. His world is so small that he missed the mountain range sitting in his backyard.

"Look," I say, "Tomorrow morning, look right out past those trees, and you'll see mountains." Again he cranes his neck, this time squinting into the gray sky.

"Oh, now you a mountain mover. You just gonna whoop up a mountain out there."

"That's right," I laugh, "I'm a mountain mover. I'm going to move a mountain just for you. Put it right out there for you to see. Faith of a mustard seed," I add, but he misses that one.

The next morning feels like Christmas. Before I've poured my first cup of coffee, I stand in my driveway, searching for mountains. And there they are. You can't miss them. I actually feel as if I've had something to do with those mountains showing up.

Me and my bagful of books pass through the hospital school's lobby that afternoon. When I walk into the room, my student is sitting up in bed, pointing out the window.

"There's mountains out there!" he says with his voice jumping octaves. I nod and point too. We don't say anything for a while. It's as if we are keeping a secret. It reminds me of an old sales technique I used to use. See, when you're closing a deal and you're at that critical moment where they may buy or walk away, you don't talk. You simply push the contract in front of the customer. And you wait.

While my student stares out at the mountains, I quietly pull a book from my bag and place it in front of him. I don't say a word. He picks it up and checks out the cover.

"I think we were reading this in my English class."

The deal is closed and the book is open. It feels a lot like moving mountains.

**Chris Bowen** teaches third grade at Pace Elementary School in Downey, California, and in the afternoon, he teaches students who can't come to a school building.

PHOTO: BOB RIHA JR.

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